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NMI Museum seeks $250K for additional storage. PAGE 3

Hafa Adai!

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Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, right, speaks with U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) soon after the congressional delegation arrived at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport from Tinian. ***See more photos on Page 13***
ERWIN ENCINARES

Murkowski: CW extension bill may pass Senate unanimously

By ERWIN ENCINARES
erwin_encinares@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

» **'There is general and broad support'**

Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) believes her legislation that would extend the sunset provision of the CNMI-Only Transitional Worker Program would pass the U.S. Senate unanimously.

Murkowski, who was concluding her one-day visit to Tinian and Saipan yesterday, said in a brief press conference immediately after the customary wreath-laying at the Court of Honor of the American Memorial Park that she believes S. 2325, or her

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BEH confirms mold at Guma Hustisia

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. Bureau of Environmental Health confirmed yesterday of the discovery of mold at the Guma Hustisia or the House of Justice building in Susupe.

CHCC public information officer Sami Birmingham-Babauta also disclosed that BEH inspectors revisited the Guma Hustisia building on Mon-

See BEH on Page 4

'All brush fires now extinguished'

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

After wrestling with outbreaks of brush fires the past several days, the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services announced early last night that all wildland fires have been extinguished.

"As of 6pm (Tuesday night) all wildland fires were extinguished," said DFEMS spokesperson Derek Gersonde in a phone interview with

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Murkowski: Filling jobs with citizens easier said than done

Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) delivers her remarks yesterday during a luncheon meeting at the Surf Club in Chalan Kanoa yesterday. To her left is Gov. Ralph DLG Torres.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

By BEA CABRERA
beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

Not unlike her home state of Alaska, Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) said the CNMI faces challenges and issues that are not familiar to other states and that understanding links her to Commonwealth leaders that met her during her arrival yesterday on Saipan.

"'To say that U.S. citizens can easily come here and fill jobs in the Commonwealth is easier said than done.' Such a statement can only be expressed by someone who can relate with the CNMI's remoteness and workforce shortage," she said during her speech at a luncheon meeting at the Surf Club in Chalan Kanoa yesterday.

Immediately after landing on Saipan from a trip to Tinian,

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Video of a fatal pedestrian crash is prompting calls to slow down testing of self-driving cars.
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ASIA
Speculation about a visit to Beijing by North Korean leader Kim Jong Un is running high.
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'Ready Player One' takes the legendary Steven Spielberg back and to the future.
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Local

Local company takes over IHOP/Ajisen on Saipan

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

A newly formed local company has acquired the IHOP and Ajisen restaurants on Saipan from Pacific Pancakes and Oishi CNMI.

Pacific Foods CNMI, led by its president Ralph Yumul and his brother, former senator Ray Yumul, and another investor, formally took over the two franchises yesterday.

Ralph Yumul, who is also a former representative, said the over $800,000 acquisition cost is a combination of loan and purchase price.

Negotiations took over six months as they initially only wanted to buy the Ajisen restaurant because of the large amount involved.

"After so many negotiations it became a package deal," he said.

Ralph Yumul said the acquisition would not affect employees of the two restaurants, as they will retain their current staffing of over 30. They're looking, though, at cutting operational expenses.

"The major part of it is trying to control the expense. Operating a restaurant in the CNMI is very expensive," he said.

One of the things being mulled is closing IHOP an hour early. Unlike Ajisen, the former doesn't really do well during dinner. Currently, IHOP is open from 7am to 10pm daily, while Ajisen is from 11am to 10pm.

They're also looking at expanding IHOP's Chamorro breakfast menu and guaranteeing that breakfast is served 12 minutes after being ordered.

Pacific Foods CNMI president Ralph Yumul, leftmost, is joined by Ajisen restaurant staff. MARK RABAGO

Limited parking is also an issue at the current site, Ralph Yumul said. Moving one restaurant to another site would solve the problem.

"It's easier to move Ajisen because it's smaller," he said.

It's a homecoming of sorts for the Yumul brothers as the family's YCO Corp. used to operate two Jollibee restaurants on Saipan before closing the last branch in 2008 as the franchise term expired.

"It's been over 10 years since we operated Jollibee. It's very exciting for me so when the opportunity came to acquire Ajisen and IHOP I quickly jumped on it," he said.

Now that a Saipan business owns IHOP and Ajisen, Ralph Yumul is inviting Saipan residents to try out their new restaurants.

"It's locally owned, so come on down and support local businesses," he said.

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Ex-convict pleads guilty to 'ice' charge

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A man arrested last December for trafficking methamphetamine or "ice" pleaded guilty yesterday to illegal possession of a controlled substance.

Raymond DLG King, 52, waived a presentence investigation report. He will be sentenced on May 16.

Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho noted that King has a prior conviction for theft by failure to make required disposition of funds received.

After the hearing, Camacho remanded King into the custody of the Department of Corrections pending his sentencing.

King was one of six persons arrested for trafficking and illegal possession of methamphetamine in separate operations by the CNMI Drug Enforcement Task Force and Drug Enforcement Administration in early December 2017.

Last Dec. 12, the Office of the Attorney General filed an information charging King with two counts of trafficking of a controlled substance and two counts of illegal possession of a controlled substance. The charges carry a total maximum sentence of 60 years imprisonment.

Last March 8, the OAG amended the charges against King to one count of illegal possession of a controlled substance. The offense carries a maximum sentence of five years in prison.

King, who is represented by assistant public defender Nancy Dominski, signed a plea deal with the government's counsel, assistant attorney general Chester Hinds.

According to the factual basis of the plea deal, King was caught with about 0.6 gross grams of crystal methamphetamine on Nov. 27, 2017 on Saipan.

A Drug Enforcement Task Force agent said that their "cooperating source" was able to purchase from King $180 worth of "ice" and $180 more worth of "ice" during "buy-walk" operations in Chalan Kanoa last Nov. 27 and 28.

NMI Museum seeks $250K for additional storage

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The NMI Museum is looking for $250,000 in order to build a new storage area as it currently lacks space for many ancient artifacts.

"At this point, we have used all available space for storage and we are almost at maximum capacity," said NMI Museum director Daniel Aquino.

IT&E, the U.S. Department of Defense, and Saipan Shipping Co. last year donated to the museum three 20-foot containers that were modified to serve as storage for human remains and artifacts in the museum's possession. According to Aquino, the containers were placed side by side to form a 600-foot room that could be used as a storage facility, office, or a temporary exhibit room. That available space is already used up.

Late last year, Aquino was informed that there might still be other museum belongings in the Kallingal building across the museum. Aquino later learned that the museum used to rent that space for the curator's office and as partial storage but gave it up when the budget cuts hit the museum during the administration of former governor Benigno R. Fitial.

"There is still a significant amount of property belonging to the museum at the Kallingal building and we just have no place to store them. A good amount of property that were stored at the Kallingal building were eaten by termites or damaged by moisture," said Aquino.

A tour of the Kallingal building showed that all the artifacts once stored there are now completely infested with termites and covered in mold and dust.

Artifacts included an ancient Chamorro canoe, photographs that date back to the Japanese era, Japanese army uniforms and war gear, artifacts obtained from the Spanish galleon *Nuestra Senora de la Concepcion*, books on the history of the *Concepcion*, and remains of World War II soldiers.

"The property at the Kallingal building cannot be stored inside the museum because those items have been contaminated with termites and we run the risk of bringing those termites into the museum after we had just eradicated a termite colony within our building," he said.

Aquino plans to create additional storage space by enclosing the *pala pala* behind the museum to store what is left of the artifacts that are too valuable to throw away, and for the documents that can still be salvaged from the Kallingal building.

"Storage is always going to be an issue with any museum and unfortunately the old Japanese hospital was never equipped with these things. To help with storage, I gave up my office and two other office spaces and procured shelves to store vases from the Concepcion collection that were just lying on our floors or transferred from the Kallingal building," he said.

Fortunately, Aquino said that he has already received assurance from the House of Representatives in regards to their requested funding.

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Engine: 4-Cyl, Hybrid, 1.3 Liter
Trans: Automatic, CVT
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Color: WHITE
$8,495

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Engine: V6, i-VTEC, 3.5 Liter
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Color: GRAY
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FIRES

From Page 1

Saipan Tribune last night.

One of the bigger brush fires that have been controlled was the one that broke out in Papago below Mt. Tapochao on Monday. Before being extinguished, it spread to Kannat Tabla earlier Tuesday and destroyed a total of 120 acres of vegetation.

Gersonde said no house was burned and no one was reported injured.

DFEMS said that at 10:40pm Monday night, the fire's head below Mt. Tapochao continued to move southwest and spread toward Kannat Tabla.

The fire's tail continued eastward, backing up toward Mt. Tapochau.

DFEMS fielded a team Monday night on Mt. Tapochao, another team in Kannat Tabla by Bishop Estate, and another in Papago.

DFEMS earlier said they can't get an accurate rate of the spread of the fire due to the distance and lack of light illumination.

Two members of the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services team walk past the destruction left by the brush fire on Kannat Tabla hill yesterday. DFEMS said the fire, which started in Evergreen below Mt. Tapochau on Monday, wiped out 120 acres of vegetation.

Because of the fire's approach to the residential area in Kannat Tabla and Papago Monday and early Tuesday, DFEMS stationed their teams in the tree locations to monitor the fire's movement.

DFEMS also contacted the Commonwealth Ports Authority Airport Rescue Fire Fighting to have their tankers on standby, and the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. to turn on the water feeding hydrants in Papago, Kannat Tabla, and Capital Hill to resupply the fire trucks.

DFEMS also called private water delivery companies and alerted them about possibly being activated later Monday night or Tuesday morning

The water companies have loaded their tankers with over 10,000 gallons of water in preparation.

Three brush fires occurred in different spots on Saipan over the weekend, destroying acres of vegetation, while another brush fire broke out on Rota last Sunday. No one was reported injured in all those fires.

Last Thursday, the National Weather Service Forecast Office in Guam issued a notice that the drought in the CNMI is expected to worsen in the next couple of weeks.

Following the issuance of the notice and with the expectation of moderate to occasionally strong trade winds over most of Micronesia in the next couple of months, the Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Management is advising CNMI residents to refrain from outdoor burning activities to avoid wildfires and endanger surrounding life and property.

Last Tuesday midnight, a fire engulfed a two-story house in Chalan Kanoa as the brush fire that broke out a day before (Monday) was still spreading at Wireless Ridge that day (Tuesday).

Last March 12, three grass fires destroyed a total of over an acre of vegetation near Gregorio T. Camacho Elementary School in San Roque and at the Tanapag Cemetery.

A brush fire swept through 4.5 acres of vegetation in Papago last March 7. Two weeks before that, multiple brush fires occurred on Tinian and Rota.

Gersonde reminded the public that the best prevention against wildland fires is not burning anything on the grasslands as they are easily ignitable because of the dry season.

EXTENSION

From Page 1

bill that extends the transitional period for another 10 years, would garner unanimous support from the U.S. Senate.

Murkowski was leading an eight-person congressional delegation, or codel, which consisted of her husband, Verne Martell; Joint Region Marianas commander Rear Adm. Shoshana Chatfield; Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP); Delegate Aumua Amata C. Radewagen (R-AS); U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources senior Republican counsel Isaac Edwards; committee staff Emy Lesofski; and U.S. Department of Defense's commander Jeremy Lyon.

According to Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, who was with the delegation for most of the trip, they visited places such as the Last Command Post; Suicide Cliff; Banzai Cliff; and other sites on Saipan and on Tinian.

The codel also had a closed-door lunch meeting on Saipan with several members of the business sector as well as members of the 20th CNMI Legislature.

The wreath-laying ceremony, which was held yesterday afternoon, was followed by a brief press conference. The press conference was the media's only opportunity to raise questions.

Responding to a question on the chances of her legislation getting enacted by the Trump administration, which does not really support immigration laws, Murkowski said she believes that U.S. President Donald J. Trump would consider enacting the legislation if the U.S. Senate supports it unanimously.

"I think we have worked very hard to find a product that is a compromise—we recognize that this [bill] is not anything that all would want, but that is what makes legislation. We are very close, I believe, to moving this legislation through the [U.S.] Senate with unanimous consent," Murkowski said.

"[The unanimous support, if obtained,] is very telling. I think that gives the President a very clear message—that there is general and broad support—and I do believe that he will sign it," Murkowski added.

Due to the codel's tight schedule, not too many queries were entertained. The codel's next destination is Palau. Yesterday, the codel visited Guam and Tinian. The group arrived on Saipan past noon and immediately proceeded to the Surf Club in Chalan Kanoa for a luncheon meeting with the business community.

S. 2325, or the U.S. Workforce Act, seeks to reset the CW cap for fiscal year 2019 to 13,000; provide three-year validity to the work permits of long-time CW workers; and extend the CNMI transitional period, along with programs under it such as the CW program and E-2C investor program, to fiscal year 2029.

Effectively, S. 2325 extends the CW program for an additional 10 years.

S. 2325 was introduced by Murkowski on the U.S. Senate floor on Jan. 19, 2018. Simultaneously, CNMI Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) introduced to the U.S. House the exact same bill.

On Feb. 6, 2018, a legislative hearing was held on S.2325. Murkowski, who chairs the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, also led the bipartisan, bicameral working group tasked with studying the parameters of the extension.

A substitute bill was reported out on March 20, 2018. That same day, S.2325 was placed on the U.S. Senate calendar.

BEH

From Page 1

day to examine the mold's growth over the weekend, if any.

"BEH's goal is to ensure that there are remedial actions taken to address the mold to provide a clean and safe environment for the employees and patrons that access the Judiciary building day-to-day," Birmingham-Babauta said.

The building has remained closed to the public since last March 16. The Judiciary announced that the building will remain close to the public this week.

A source said the Judiciary gave masks yesterday to court staff working in the building.

The source said Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho still holds office in his chamber as his staff has to be in the building. Other judges and justices have not stayed long in their chambers, the source said.

The Superior Court has been temporarily holding hearings in a small room at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center and at the Department of Public Safety's training offices.

Chief Justice Alexandro C. Castro and Presiding Judge Roberto C. Naraja last Monday said alternative locations for judiciary operations and court services will be used until the air-conditioning system at the Judiciary is fully restored.

Birmingham-Babauta said BEH was made aware of the possible detection of mold at Guma Hustisia concurrent with the closure of the building due to a faulty central air-conditioning system.

Birmingham-Babauta said that BEH inspectors did a walk-through last Wednesday, March 21, and discovered mold in the ceiling acoustic panels, walls, chairs, vent grills, cabinet doors, and furniture.

She said the areas in the building identified as most affected were the probation office, courtrooms, and the record and payment office.

Birmingham-Babauta said that, according to the Judiciary's building superintendent, Gene Weaver, a Guam-based engineering firm, William Miller Associates, was contracted to assess the mold in the building.

She said Weaver stated that the engineering firm has already completed its data collection for mold assessment and a final report is forthcoming.

The information officer said the entire building remains off-limits to the public and nonessential staff.

FILLING

From Page 1

Murkowski and her delegation headed straight to the closed lunch meeting and met with Gov. Ralph Torres, the Saipan Chamber of Commerce and members of the CNMI business community, and the rest of the Commonwealth leadership.

Torres expressed gratitude to Murkowski for accepting his invitation to visit the CNMI. "We are very blessed and fortunate to have her here. She is the voice of the CNMI in the Senate. I cannot ask for a better person to represent us in the Senate than Sen. Murkowski with her team and staff.

"I hope she can enjoy Saipan and the rest of the CNMI and be the first on the ground. I am sure we will welcome her back in the event she has the opportunity to visit the CNMI again…" he added.

Being from Alaska, Murkowski could relate to the CNMI better than other lawmakers on Capitol Hill, said Rep. Angel Demapan (R-Saipan).

"She spoke about Alaska being one of the states that is not in the contiguous 48 (states) and about the unique needs of Alaska being detached from the mainland. She compared it to our situation, our remoteness and our geographic proximity, being detached also from the 48 states," he said.

"The challenges are similar. The cost of services is higher because of the distance and there is a shortage in the labor pool because U.S. citizens cannot just drive from the mainland to Alaska and back. The situation is the same with the mainland and the CNMI," he added.

Northern Marianas Business Alliance Corp. president Alex Sablan said the CNMI business community cannot thank the senator enough for pursuing the Workforce Act legislation and coming to the CNMI to see the circumstances firsthand.

"It was a great lunch meeting and we give thanks to the senator for coming all the way out from Washington, D.C. As I mentioned in our brief comments, she has been a champion for the CNMI in the U.S. Senate.

"She's our voice in the CNMI by championing this bill. As we have been diligent and vocal that, without the legislation, the economy will collapse and when it does, it will be catastrophic for the people in the CNMI," Sablan added.

NMBAC officer Gloria Cavanagh said the luncheon meeting started and ended on a positive note.

"It was a fruitful meeting all throughout. She came out here to begin with and she drew real comparison to the challenges between Alaska and the CNMI, which turns out pretty much the same when it comes to workers. Murkowski described the situation in Alaska where they are so remote that they are unable to get into particular industries, which is the same with us as we are so far away that people from California who come here later realize that it so cost-constrictive such as when they decide to visit their parents back in the [United] States," she said.

"She is thoroughly enjoying it her trip here. We hope that she sees that there is a lot of work that is going on and, as far as workers are concerned, all of this can potentially stop come April 3. I feel confident that she understands and we are just really glad they she came out and thankful for her support," she added.

A business person who was at the meeting, but asked not to be identified, said he is thankful for the senator's visit but encouraged the foreign workforce to read the bill as well as it is for their common good.

"We thank the senator for coming all the way here and for working very hard on trying to implement this the bill. Everybody must read the bill and not believe just what you want to hear," he said. "I call for all the foreign workers to be diligent and not be complacent as when you pass and get your working visa, you stop there. That's not enough and I suggest you read the bill—what will be expected, the terms, the duration, and requirements as it is very important people must be educated."

Demapan said that Murskowski, as chairman of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, can always put together any legislation that the committee feels necessary.

"…she took that extra step to come and physically step foot on the ground to understand fully what the situation of the economy is like," he said.

"In the past, U.S. government leaders in D.C. are making decisions in haste, being thousands and thousands of miles away for a place, a community, and people they have little knowledge about. For Sen. Murkowski to come here and bridge that gap gives us a sense of assurance and relief … I think that is something that the people of the Commonwealth should appreciate and embrace," he added.

Japan arrivals up 9 pct.

Visitors arrivals to the CNMI in February were 8 percent lower compared to February 2017 but the silver lining is that Japanese arrivals went up, breaking a streak of successive declines in arrivals from the Japan market.

According to the Marianas Visitors Authority, arrivals to the islands of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota registered 53,045 visitors in February 2018, compared to 57,320 visitors received in February 2017.

Arrivals from Japan climbed 9 percent higher than February 2017 to 4,725 visitors. While Delta Lines has announced it will discontinue its Tokyo Narita-Saipan daily flight in early May 2018, the MVA is currently in confidential negotiations with several airlines to pick up the route or expand to other cities in the source market.

"We are very optimistic about ongoing airline negotiations for future service from Japan to Saipan, and we are pleased to announce that we have a Japan-based carrier who has expressed solid interest in launching direct flights from two cities in Japan to the Marianas toward the third or fourth quarter of this year. They did a site inspection of the [Francisco C. Ada] International Airport and met with key stakeholders last month, and everything looks positive," said MVA managing director Christopher A. Concepcion.

» Overall visitor arrivals in Feb. down 8 pct.

"We have been working diligently and creatively over the last year and half to revitalize the image of the Marianas in the Japan market, and we are hopeful for an uptick in the market this year," Concepcion added. "The MVA has not rested and will not rest until we have an airline ready to fly from Japan to the Marianas. We are excited about this new carrier and look to them as our long-term partner for the Japan market. Through our efforts, the efforts of Gov. [Ralph DLG] Torres and other leaders, and with the new incentive program approved by the Commonwealth Ports Authority for new entrants and new routes, we are very hopeful about the future of the Japan market. We expect arrivals from Japan to finally see growth this year."

Arrivals from Korea fell 26 percent to 22,365 visitors, largely due to the suspension of Incheon-Saipan service by Eastar Jet and Busan-Saipan service by Asiana Airlines since October 2017. Asiana Airlines operated chartered flights for two months in 2017, January and February, which also attributed to a decrease in arrivals year-on-year. The airlines serving Incheon-Saipan are Asiana Airlines, Jeju Air, and T'way Air. Jin Air has temporarily suspended its Incheon-Saipan service until June 2018.

Arrivals from China jumped 20 percent compared to February 2017 to 23,456 visitors, allowing the market to outperform Korea for the first month this fiscal year. The popular Lunar New Year holiday travel period landed in February this year versus January in 2017. In addition, recent volcanic eruptions in Bali and domestic conflict in the Maldives have also driven more visitors to the Marianas versus these competing beach destinations.

Economic highlights

Recent economic indicators point to a weakening Korean economy being shored up largely by an increase in exports. Business sentiment is pessimistic as manufacturing and construction sectors suffer setbacks. The average USD/won exchange rate in February was 1,080.07 won, a slight increase from the previous rate of 1,064.29 won in January.

In 2017, the number of Chinese citizens traveling abroad was 130.51 million, with an increase of 7.0 percent over the past year. The exchange rate stabilized during February perhaps signaling a bottom at around 6.3 RMB to USD.

Strong global economic dynamics and accommodative monetary conditions led the Japanese economy to expand for the eighth consecutive quarter in the fourth quarter, marking the longest period of uninterrupted growth since 1980. Monthly average rate for the U.S. dollar to the Japanese yen exchange in February 2018 was 107.98 compared to 111.07 in January 2018. ***(MVA)***

Airman found dead at Guam base

ANDERSEN AIR FORCE BASE, Guam—An airman at Andersen was found unresponsive in base quarters and was pronounced dead at approximately 3am March 27.

"This is a terrible tragedy, and we are all deeply saddened by the loss of this Airman," said Brig. Gen. Douglas A. Cox, 36th Wing commander. "Losing a member of our team is the most difficult thing we face, and today we have lost a member of our Air Force family," he said. "Our deepest sympathies, thoughts and prayers go with the family. We will ensure the welfare of those directly affected by this tragedy."

In accordance with U.S. Air Force policy, the airman's name is being withheld for 24 hours after next of kin notification. The cause of death is currently under investigation. ***(PR)***

Lacson graduates from basic training

U.S. Air Force Airman 1st Class Philippe Lacson graduated from basic military training at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, San Antonio, Texas.

Airmen who complete basic training also earn four credits toward an associate in applied science degree through the Community College of the Air Force.

He is a 2017 graduate of Kagman High School. ***(PR)***

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‘Faith is a focal point in women’s summit’

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The 5th Annual Women’s Summit kicked off Monday at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center with a focus on the importance of faith in the community.

According to CNMI Women’s Association president Rose Hocog, the summit discusses different topics based on the needs of the women in the community and faith is an important subject.

Hocog said that, in the past year alone, many people, especially women, have had difficulty coping with the loss of a loved one due unfortunate tragedies. The CWA included the topic about faith to remind women that faith can be the door that leads to recovery, she said.

The annual Women’s Summit is designed to empower women and to discuss the issues they face in the world today to equip them with the spirit to overcome these issues.

“A lot of times, especially mothers, carry that burden and they blame it on themselves… so we included that topic [faith] so women can know that, in times of trouble, when your heart is breaking, when you can’t see your way out of the darkness, you have your faith to turn to,” she said.

The panelists who talked about faith were Bishop Ryan Jimenez, Pastor Beth Nunez from Grace Christian Academy, and Sr. Maryann Hartmann, one of the Mercedarian Sisters at *Maturana.*

To complement the discussion on faith, the CWA also prepared a set of panelists who will discuss mental health issues so that women, especially younger women, are equipped with the knowledge that there are resources and there are people in the community who are ready to step up and help.

The free two-day summit ended yesterday.

On Monday, over 100 individuals participated in the summit, ranging from teenaged girls to young adults, middle-aged women, and even men.

Breakfast and lunch were provided.

IN SILVER ANNIVERSARY DINNER

McDonald’s Saipan honors partners

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

McDonald’s Saipan gave its partners a fitting salute during the company’s Vendor Appreciation Dinner that also commemorated its silver anniversary Monday night at the Giovanni’s Restaurant of Hyatt Regency Saipan.

Jose “Joe” Cruz Ayuyu, president and owner/operator of McDonald’s Saipan, said the fastfood franchisee is dedicating the whole evening to its vendors.

“We want to honor them and thank them for sticking with McDonald’s during the turbulent times and the good times. We’re very fortunate to have [such] partners…on the island,” he said.

Later in the evening, McDonald’s Saipan gave corporate awards made out of crystal in the shape of French fries to five vendors that have served the company since Day 1: Herman’s Modern Bakery, Coca-Cola Beverage Co. (Micronesia), Matson, Inc., Calvo’s Insurance, and Yaong Corp.

“I want to be successful but I also want our partners to be successful because, if they’re not successful, we won’t also be successful,” said Ayuyu, who added that McDonald’s owe these five companies big time, recalling the times when they’d call Herman’s Bakery to make extra buns, ask Matson to prioritize their cargo so they can unload their items literally an hour after the ship had docked, and how Coca-Cola partly built its plant on Middle Road to accommodate McDonald’s standards.

Jose “Joe” Cruz Ayuyu, president and owner/operator of McDonald’s Saipan, and Marcia Ayuyu, who is the company’s owner/operator, speak about the opening of McDonald’s Saipan during the company’s Vendor Appreciation Dinner Monday night at the Giovanni’s Restaurant of Hyatt Regency Saipan. MARK RABAGO

Ayuyu said it wasn’t all a bed of roses the past 25 years.

“It’s been a very long journey for me and my wife since we opened McDonald’s Saipan 25 years ago. The journey has been bumpy over the years. But if you don’t go through those bumps, you wouldn’t know how to get better,” he said.

Ayuyu is appreciative of what McDonald’s Saipan has meant to his family and has no regrets.

“We were able to raise a family and send our kids to school [because of McDonald’s]. My expectations were not to become rich but just to make enough money to be able to support my family so I can give my children an education that was a lot better than what I had,” said Ayuyu, who is the first in his family to graduate from college.

Ayuyu’s wife, Marcia, who is also the company’s owner/operator, said this milestone is something she would cherish.

“Twenty-five years ago I was taking care of a 4-year-old and a 2-year-old. Now, I look back and the 4-year-old and a 2-year-old are now working in the family business,” said Marcia, who has another daughter, Ashley, working in Guam.

Aside from honoring partners, McDonald’s Saipan also gave $3,000 to the Salvation Army as part of its 25th anniversary donation.

A surprised Pastor Wayne Gillespie thanked the Ayuyu family for the kind gesture and said it would go a long way in keeping its pantries stocked.

American Red Cross-NMI Chapter executive director John Hirsh and Northern Marianas Athletics president Ramon Tebuteb also paid tribute to McDonald’s Saipan for the support they’ve given to their groups.

Hirsh said McDonald’s Saipan has been an invaluable partner, not only in the local Red Cross chapter’s yearly signature walkathon fundraiser, but also has helped in its fire prevention campaigns and in the aftermath of Typhoon Soudelor in 2015.

Tebuteb said the company has unofficially sponsored the track and field association’s all-schools championship since 2002. He recalled that McDonald’s Saipan has been in the group’s consciousness since 1993, the year when it opened, when their volunteers who just survived a boat capsizing immediately asked to be treated to McDonald’s soon after their rescue.

McDonald’s Saipan presents a $3,000 to the Salvation Army as part of its 25th anniversary donation during the company’s Vendor Appreciation Dinner Monday night at the Giovanni’s Restaurant of Hyatt Regency Saipan. MARK RABAGO

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Grammy winner to serve sentence in HI

HAGATNA, Guam (AP)— A Grammy Award-winning singer who gained fame for hits from "Jesus Christ Superstar" and "Saturday Night Fever" and pleaded guilty to drug possession charges in Guam will be able to serve her sentence in Hawaii, her lawyer said.

Yvonne Marianne Elliman-Alexander, 66, who performs under her maiden name Yvonne Elliman, and her husband, Allen Bernard Alexander, were sentenced Tuesday in the U.S. territory, where they had gone to perform at a benefit concert.

Their attorney, Mike Phillips, told The Associated Press they received a 14-day sentence Tuesday that they will be able to serve by observing courtroom proceedings of a drug offender probation program in Honolulu. They will likely have to do that for 13 days because they will receive credit for one day of incarcerated time served, Phillips said. They both pleaded guilty to felony drug possession charges in August.

After a court appearance Monday in Guam, Elliman-Alexander said she and her husband had performed about 120 hours of community service in Hawaii, where they live.

"Get help, and when you›re feeling stronger, help others," Elliman-Alexander said. "I think that›s why we did so well because we did help other people."

Airport officers said they found marijuana in Alexander's belongings and crystal-like rocks and a glass pipe in Elliman-Alexander's belongings, the Pacific Daily News reported .

The couple were arrested in Guam, but the concert they performed to benefit a Catholic school went forward even though the archdiocese on the heavily Catholic island opposed it.

Phillips said his clients have completed everything they were assigned — making him optimistic about their upcoming sentence.

The court previously granted the couple›s request to leave Guam and return to Hawaii to care for Elliman-Alexander's ailing mother after they pleaded guilty. They have been checking in with probation officials through email.

Elliman-Alexander had her first hit, "I Don't Know How to Love Him" from "Jesus Chris Superstar," and she played Mary Magdalene in the 1973 movie version of the Broadway hit. She also performed "If I Can't Have You" on the "Saturday Night Fever" soundtrack, which won a Grammy for album of the year in 1978.

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-18-003

LOWER BASE SEWER PHASE 1 – LIFT STATION AND FORCEMAIN

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Construction of Lower Base Sewer Phase 1 – Lift Station and Forcemain in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

This work consists of new installation of a lift station and forcemain, a new generator building, new and tapping into the existing forcemain. The work also includes the installation of air relief valves, gate valves, and asphalt pavement restoration, etc. The work shall be done in accordance with the Project Plans and Specifications. CUC requires the Project to be completed in **300 calendar days** from date of award of contract.

This project is funded by a grant from the United States Economic Development Authority (USEDA) and the Department of Interior (USDOI). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of the approval for project award from USEDA and USDOI.

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $100.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by a Site Visit is scheduled on **April 3rd, 2018 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building. Prospective Bidders are mandated to attend the Pre-Bid Conference and Site Visit.

One (1) Original and Five (5) Hard Copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked *"CUC-IFB-18-003, Lower Base Sewer Phase 1- Lift Station and Forcemain"* to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on April 18th, 2018**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement the form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.

A Bid Guarantee of fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. A Payment Bond of one hundred (100%) percent and a Performance Bond of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands or otherwise secured in a manner satisfactory to CUC, for the protection of all persons supplying labor and material to the contractor or its subcontractors for the performance of the work provided for in the contract.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract. Bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proponents and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on April 5th, 2018** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Officer via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Christie Sablan, CUC P&S, Purchasing Assistant via email christie.sablan@cugov.org and to Travis Spaeth, CUC Project Engineer via email address travis.spaeth@cucgov.org .

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Officer

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
CUC-RFP-18-015

LEASE OF OFFICE/WAREHOUSE SPACE FOR CUC POWER DIVISION TRANSMISSION & DISTRIBUTION SECTION, SAIPAN CNMI

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC), is soliciting competitive sealed proposals from firms for the lease of office & warehouse spaces for CUC Power Division, Transmission & Distribution Section in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The proposed office space may be situated within or adjacent to the warehouse. The office & warehouse must have a loading dock and parking stalls that can accommodate over-sized heavy equipment (e. g. bucket trucks, augers and backhoes). Additionally, the proposed office space must conform to American Disabilities Act (ADA), OSHA and CNMI Zoning requirements.

The RFP Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $50.00 (non-refundable) for one RFP package set. Prospective Proposers must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division.

One (1) original and four (4) hard copies, along with an electronic copy of the proposal on a compact disk in PDF format must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked *"CUC-RFP-18-015, Lease of Office/Warehouse Space for CUC Power Division Transmission and Distribution Section, Saipan, CNMI"* to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **April 16, 2018 at 10:00 AM (ChST).** Late submissions and conditional proposals will not be considered.

Discussions may be conducted with responsible offerors who submit proposals determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. Offerors shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity to discussion and revision of proposals, and such revision may be permitted after submission and prior to award for the purpose of obtaining the best and final offers. During discussions, there will be no disclosure of any information derived from proposals submitted by competing offerors.

All Offeror are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the Offeror due to lack of information or understanding of the proposal requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a proposal or supply under the contract. The RFP does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the proposal under this request, or to procure or contract for services. Offeror are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All responses to this RFP should take into account any and all taxes, which will become the obligation of the proponent awarded a contract. Successful proponents will be required to submit a copy of a valid CNMI Business license in compliance with the Licensing Laws of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, upon award of the contract. Proponents shall comply to all applicable CNMI and Federal Laws.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on March 28, 2018** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC, Purchasing Officer via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Lee Lieto, CUC, Acting Power Division Manager via email address lee.lieto@cucgov.org, Adrian Reyes, CUC, Power Division Engineer via email address adrian.reyes@cucgov.org and Christie Sablan, CUC, Purchasing Technician, Senior via email address christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals for any reason and to waive any defects in said proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Officer

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Office of the Secretary of Public Works
2nd Floor Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan, MP 96950

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
DPW/SWMD-18-RFP-005

ENGINEERING DESIGN SERVICES FOR THE MARPI LANDFILL CELL NO. 3 SAIPAN CNMI

Governor Ralph Dlg. Torres and Lt. Governor Victor B. Hocog, through the Department of Public Works (DPW) are soliciting sealed Proposals for the **Engineering Design Services for the Marpi Landfill Cell No.3**, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

This procurement is made in accordance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations, dated 2004 ed. Proposal procedures shall be in full compliance with **§70-30.3-305** of the regulations.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITUES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

Prior to being awarded a design contract, the firm or company must have or obtain a valid Certificate of Authorization (COA) from the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Board of Professional Licensing. Information about obtaining a COA may be requested from Ms. Esther S. Fleming, Executive Director, at telephone numbers (670)234-5897/5898 or by facsimile to (670) 234-6040.

The RFP Package and Scope of Work is available on or after **March 14, 2018** at the Department of Public Works, Office of the Secretary, 2nd Floor, Oleai Commercial Center, Saipan. A non-refundable payment of **Fifty Dollars ($50.00)** is required for each set. Payment must be made to the CNMI Teasurer and a receipt of payment must be presented when obtaining the Scope of Work at the DPW Technical Services Division.

A Pre-Proposal Conference is scheduled for 9:00 a.m. local time at the **Department of Public Works Conference Room**, 2nd Floor Oleai Joeten Commercial Building on **April 2, 2018**. Questions regarding this RFP must be submitted in writing to Mr. Anthony A. Camacho, Director of Technical Services Division, 2nd Floor Oleai Commercial Center, Saipan, no later than 4:30 p.m. local time **April 12, 2018**. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective proposers

SELECTION CRITERIA: This procurement is made in accordance with **§70-30.3-305** of the CNMI Procurement Regulations, 2004 ed. Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. Qualifications of the principal(s) and assigned staff – 25%
2. Experience of the firm(s) on similar type projects – 25%
3. Project Approach – 30%
4. Schedule of Completion – 20%

The entire Proposal must not be more than Twenty-Five (25) pages in length. A firm that submits a Proposal as a prime consultant cannot submit as a subconsultant on another Proposal. However, a sub-consultant may submit as sub-consultant on proposals by more than one prime consultant.

The successful Proposer shall be subject to a responsibility determination in accordance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations, **§70-30.3-245**.

Proposals must be sealed and marked "DPW18-RFP-005". For Proposers located within the CNMI, one original and five (5) copies of sealed proposals must be submitted to the Director of Procurement and Supply, Ascencion Drive, Capitol Hill, Saipan, no later than 10:00 a.m. local time, **April 17, 2018**. Proposers located outside the CNMI may obtain an additional seven (7) working days for receipt of their proposal by submitting a Notice of Intent to Propose. Notices of Intent to Propose must be received by the Director of Procurement & Supply no later than 10:00 a.m. local time, April 17, 2018, and may be transmitted via facsimile to (670) 664-1515, or via e-mail to procurement@pticom.com. For proposers located outside the CNMI, one original and five (5) copies of sealed proposals must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service or the official government postal service of a foreign country no later than **April 17, 2018** – AND must be received no later than **April 27, 2018**. Note that failure to submit the required number of copies may be cause for rejection of a proposal.

Discussion shall be conducted with at least three of the firms regarding the contract requirements and technical approach and selection made there from, in order of preference, of no less than three firms determined to be the most highly qualified to perform the services required. Fee proposals is solicited; however, this information shall not be considered in the selection of the most highly qualified Firms. Fee proposals may be used in determining a fair and reasonable price.

The government reserves the right to reject any or all Proposals and to waive any imperfections in any Proposal in the best interest of the Government. All Proposals shall become the property of the Government.

JAMES A. ADA
Secretary of Public Works

HERMAN S. SABLAN
Director, Procurement & Supply

Rota senator disappointed with veto

By ERWIN ENCINARES
erwin_encinares@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres' decision to veto a certain allocation in a recently passed Rota local law has prompted a Rota senator to express disappointment with the governor during a Senate session last Thursday.

Sen. Steve Mesngon (R-Rota), who chairs the Rota Legislative Delegation, the governor had no reason to veto a specific portion of the bill as the language involved with the appropriation was identical to other legislations of a similar nature.

Torres, in enacting House Local Bill 20-55 into Rota Local Law 20-08, vetoed a $70,880 appropriation for the Rota Legislative Delegation's operations as well as an additional $20,000 for the Grace Christian Academy Rota and the Eskuelan San Francisco de Borja.

The local bill altogether appropriates over $1.4 million in funding from the casino license renewal fee under Public Law 18-56 to various Rota programs, agencies, and offices.

Of the total, Torres vetoed $70,880 allocated to the delegation after explaining in his transmittal letter that it did not specify how the funds would be used.

"Due to the reservations I have regarding the provision's failure to delineate the particular purpose for this operational funding, and until such time that the purpose of this funding is made apparent, I must respectfully veto this provision," Torres explained.

According to Mesngon: "I am just so concerned [because] the governor vetoed this item when there is also local laws from the Tinian delegation [and] Saipan delegation, which [had] the same appropriation and language. I am very, very disappointed."

Mesngon pointed out that some medical referral patients have approached the Rota delegation to seek assistance, which was the intention of the provision.

"I am not sure what happened to the governor, but he vetoed this provision [that] supports our community, especially the people of Rota," said Mesngon.

Torres also vetoed a provision of the bill, which appropriated $220,000 for GCA Rota and Eskuelan San Francisco de Borja, since both schools are considered private.

"…Local appropriations bills seeking to allocate public funds to private schools cannot be approved absent justification of a public purpose for which the funding is intended to carry out," said Torres, adding that provision failed to describe a specific public purpose for the funds and is therefore in violation of the public purposes statute, hence the veto.

"…Although I agree with the intent of much of this bill and understand its significance in the sustainability and advancement of the lives of the people of [Rota], I urge the local delegation to revisit the matter and re-appropriate the remaining funds in consideration of the public purpose requirement," said the governor.

Magnitude 6.6 earthquake rattles Papua New Guinea

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP)—A magnitude 6.6 earthquake has rattled the Pacific island nation of Papua New Guinea, a month after a deadly quake there killed more than 100 people.

There were no immediate reports of damage or injuries from Monday's quake, which the U.S. Geological Survey said was centered in a remote area of East New Britain province.

USGS reported the quake had a depth of 40 kilometers (25 miles). Deeper earthquakes tend to cause less damage on the Earth's surface.

A magnitude 7.5 earthquake on Feb. 26 killed at least 125 people, injured dozens and brought work to a halt at four oil and gas fields.

Home to 7 million people, Papua New Guinea is located to the east of Indonesia and sits on the Pacific's "Ring of Fire."

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April 1, 2018

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PACIFIC ISLANDS CLUB SAIPAN

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
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Jayvee L. Vallejera EDITOR
editor@saipantribune.com

Mark Rabago ASSOCIATE EDITOR
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com

MEMBER

The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

March for Our Lives was a powerful, galvanizing moment. We can't let its momentum fade away

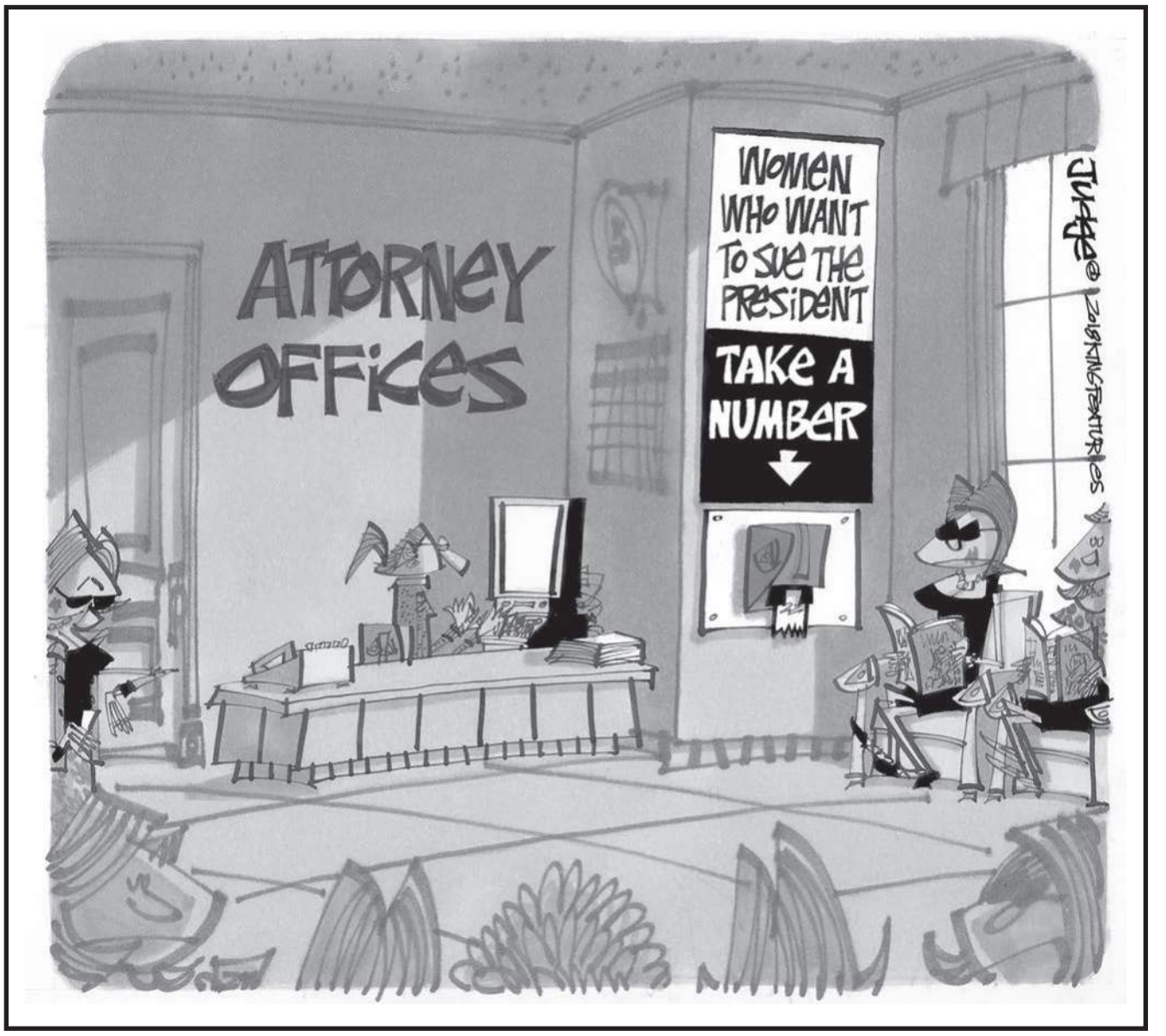
It was heartening to see the outpouring of personal stories, anger and resolve during the weekend March for Our Lives anti-gun violence protests and the ensuing social media discussions, a long-running debate re-energized through the activism and resolve of kids. It was their day in the sun, and they performed admirably, as did the adults who helped give significant mass to their movement. But the nation can't let the demonstrations vent off righteous anger over Congress' subservience to the gun lobby and its embrace of the mythical sanctity of the 2nd Amendment. This weekend must be the beginning of something.

But how to achieve that? Another day of mass disobedience is scheduled for April 20, with more than 250,000 high schoolers already vowing via a Change.org petition to walk out of their classes, an echo of the protest that arose a month after the Valentine's Day massacre at Florida's Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. More power to them—another day of action will help keep the issue current. But as the March for Our Lives activists have done, organizers of the high school walkouts should focus on results and launch voter registration drives ahead of the summer primaries and November general election. The nation has learned to its disgrace that tears of rage and grief over the slaughter of innocents are insufficient to move the cold hearts in Congress, or the cold hearts of the National Rifle Assn. leadership and its more radical members. It will take a much more potent form of political pressure to get anywhere near where we need to be on gun control.

So what does the nation need? Universal background checks for any transfer of a firearm should be an easy law to enact, given that polls have found significant public support for the idea. Second, there is no need for civilians to own such weapons of war as semiautomatic rifles. Some might find them fun to shoot, but that's hardly reason to loose them upon a civil society. And as for those who say these weapons are necessary for hunting, they need target practice more than they need access to a firearm that can fire bullets as fast as a shooter can make successive pulls on a trigger. If a ban on such weapons is beyond political reach, Congress should at a minimum outlaw bump stocks and other related devices that can convert semiautomatic guns to near-automatics. President Trump has proposed doing that by regulation, but it's unclear whether his move will pass a court challenge; Congress can and should do it by law.

There are solutions to pursue at the state level too. Given the lack of action in Congress, many states—including California—have adopted much more stringent restrictions than federal law imposes. For instance, it is illegal

See MARCH on Next Page



NRA's blunders fueled the gun-safety marches

By FRANCIS WILKINSON
Bloomberg View

Francis Wilkinson writes editorials on politics and U.S. domestic policy for Bloomberg View. *He was executive editor of the* Week. *He was previously a national affairs writer for* Rolling Stone*, a communications consultant and a political media strategist.*

You had to be there.

As Americans took to the streets Saturday, defying a political order that, in Washington and many state capitals, has allowed extremists to write gun laws, the bodies—of both the dead and the living who marched in their honor—mattered a lot. Hundreds of thousands in cities big and small showed up. It was an extraordinary coming-out party for a movement that is now, at long last, undeniably mass.

The marches against gun violence would not have been as big without the undercurrent of rage that liberals, Democrats, good-government activists, racial minorities, ethical conservatives and others carry through daily life under President Donald Trump's regime. And they wouldn't have been as big without the cathartic breakthroughs of #MeToo and the Women's March that preceded them.

The confluence of those forces—opposing sexism, racism, corruption—into the March for Our Lives is only the latest confirmation of how spectacularly the National Rifle Association has gone awry. As one handwritten poster in Los Angeles, drawing on the slogan against sexist exploitation in Hollywood, stated: "Hey NRA Time's Up."

Like the Republican Party and Trump, the NRA responded to a diversifying nation by cultivating racial reaction. Before Trump's "American carnage," NRA leader Wayne LaPierre routinely portrayed the U.S. as a dystopia overrun by madmen, criminals, perverts and fanatical terrorists. The government won't save you, LaPierre told his followers. Only guns—lots and lots of guns—will.

The NRA seized its advantage under GOP legislatures and a GOP Congress to promote a no-compromise agenda of guns everywhere for anyone. It went for all the marbles—guns in bars, churches, schools, colleges, parking lots, playgrounds—hoping to make them so pervasive that the cultural pendulum could never swing back. And it fought, even after massacres of children, to make sure that the most damaged and dangerous among us maintained convenient access to military-grade firepower.

Instead of seeking to accommodate a changing world, it vastly overreached. Payback is unlikely to be pleasant. "Hey, hey, ho, ho, the NRA has got to go" was a frequent chant throughout the country Saturday.

The gun-safety movement put youth at the vanguard, and countless youth filled in the ranks behind them. Some registered to vote. The kids knew what they were marching for—there's a list. And they knew who they were marching against. One sign captured it succinctly: "Teens vs Old people (NRA)."

If you're looking for long-term power and relevance in the U.S., getting on the wrong side of kids, women and racial minorities is probably not the best idea. The NRA understands this. The group has been making left-footed attempts in recent days to show it's hipper than you think, even featuring NRA spokesman Colion Noir, who is black, taking offense at the white privilege of the kids who survived the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Florida and have become leaders in the gun-safety cause. Black lives (suddenly) matter; just don't expect support from the NRA if your black son gets shot by a thug or a cop.

The NRA remains a powerful organization. But it's less powerful today than it was yesterday. It's less powerful in 2018—which has already seen a spate of gun regulations passed, even in gun-crazed Florida—than it was in 2017. Blue states across the nation have been enacting aggressive gun regulations without the slightest fear of the gun lobby. California and Hawaii, two states that look more like the American future than the American past, are among the leaders.

And now the gun lobby is facing a countervailing movement. Anxiety, it turns out, is not the exclusive purview of old white men uneasy about the empowerment of women and the racial composition of the nation. People afraid of being shot, or losing their children, willy-nilly because any fool can get a gun are also anxious. The marches helped ease their symptoms but with a side effect: It caused trembling in the gun lobby.

Ma-abiban kuttura

Lamegai na programa pot kutturan Chamoru giya Guahan man-mapresenta gi television gi selebrasion Mes Chamoru desde mapos na semana.

Ha inklusu offisiun suruhanu, usun tinanum para amot, kanta, baila, preparasion neñkanu`, tinanum gi gualu`, mamatinas galaide` yan peskan tasi. Mientras mas mona mas metgot detetminasion Chamoru para u sustene haf` sustansiaña kumu natibu. Mauleg na pinetsige i para ta gofli`e maisa hit mismu.

Guaha ha` hu kuestiona kau gai koneksion yan antigu na hinanau natibu. Lau presentasion mafanana`an "maestro" gi bandan kanta yan dandan. Kulan man-seda` gi tiniguñg modetnu na kinalamten sin konfitmasion!

Gi todu animu gi fina` programa i solu fitme na sahyan gaige gi liñguahen Chamoru. Sin este kanaha` tai bali todu otru pinetsige para tana` fitme pisun kutturata. Hafa na lamegai gi presentasion mapresenta gi finu` Eñglis? Ensegidas maliñgu i sahyan yan tolai sin ditension.

Debi u mapraktika sinsiyu i intension yan sahyan todu pinetsige. Haf` na desde tutuhun appling i presentasion? Magahet na mapot fuminu` Chamoru?

Propiu: Maseha fatsu i palabra lau estaya mana`e animu gi esplikasion hiniyuñg galaide` gi alacha ginen Guahan. Ilegña un` señot na i usun lañan niyog para una` "maneñgheñg ham". Ahe`, para proteksion kontra maneñgheñg mañglu`.

Ilegña i otru na para umapega i galaide` gi halum tasi ya umasatpun hanum. Era para umasatpe hanum. Satpun i `ansatpe!

Amot Natibu: Punta pot punta gi atkipelago mabohau tatte usun tinanum tanu` para amot natibu. Ti namanman pot desde antigu na tiempu i kuttura ha prebeniye siffisiente kontodu amot para i natibu.

Konfotme-yu` pot huli`e na i man-yo-amte fotmat na eskalera na mapetsisige offisiun niha. Maketuñgu` haf` chenotmu, haf` tinateña, kau guaha hau tumatme, yan otru siha pettinente na kuestion. Dispues, usun naturat na amot natibu hasan ta huñgog na gai problema i malañgu duranten ma-amteña—side effects—tai guihe amot hospitat.

Dandan: Un` lemlem tautau, sige hu rasgueo gitala-hu gi baranda pot tane`. Ha kone`yu` tatte gi pinatgon-hu. Desde ayu na tiempu umeyag-yu` siha kanta ginen mañainan mame, famaguon bisinu, eskuela, yan dispues de in` diñgu pettan sanmena. Apmam lokue` na tiempu dumandan-yu`.

Un` finagpu` dottrina sigeyu` luchan para i gima `nai husoda` defuntu Frank Limes dumadandan ukulele ya ha kakanta Five Foot Two. Hu ekuñgog ñaihon. Hana`e-yu` dispues ni ukulele ya hafanu`e-yu` usuña. Estague` primet biahe `nai hugu`ot instrumentun dandan.

Umeyag-hu` gitala ginen mauleg na tiuhu as Rudy M. Sablan. Sige mona hu atetuye mas ineyag pot para bai siña humoñu` i yabe gi katkuet sotfa ni mattu gi talañga-hu. Kase disiente pa`gu yan libianu hu dandan katkuet kanta. Lau gaige giya guahu lokue` sensian sinparat umeyag estake satisfechu-yu` ni debi bai tuñgu`.

Guaha `nai hu totpe man-na`mahalañg siha na sunidu ni muna` hahassu-yu` ni mañaina-hu man-afamau pot kontribusion niha kanta. Piot kantan ha`anen gupot siha.

Magahet na hu atetuye umakanteha `nos kuantos sunidu ni tinige` mañaina-ta pot suanu na dopblada gi palabra. Tatnai ta huñgog este na modun palabra siha na tiempu gi nuebu na kanta ni manhuyuñg.

Gi todu kantan natibu ayu mas chetton giya guahu, "Ti Gi Un` Palasyun I Riku". Patte ilelegña, "…ya ti siña hu tulaika sa` tat mas gefsaga, kumu ayu siha nas islas i Islas Marianas". Pot tano`ta! Estague` siha na petlas `nai gaige kuttura yan tradision natibu desde antigu na tiempu. Fitme na pisun natibu!

Guihan: Mamahan-yu` un` dofin (mahi mahi). Hu po`lu gi hilu labadot sin palabra. Man-mattu i famaguon ya maatan. Ni unu mamaisen haf` para umachogue. Hu sañgane na umana` gasgas. Ayu `nai man-a`atan madibina taimanu muna`gasgas guihan.

Hu agañg ya hufanu`e desde magonaf, manasuhan tilipas yan guasañg. Dispues hu pika para ma-aflitu, katdun to`lañg, yan kelaguen. Huna` fan man-hassu na famaguon isla siha ayu na debi umatuñgu pot guihan desde umakone` estake listu para benefisia.

Inadahe: I finattun yan hinanau ha`ane ni unu gumugu`ot. Desde kahulu` i atdau gi chagchag oga`an, doku`, man-ina, dispues machum gi sanlagu. Diariu, tatnai matulaika ni achog mattiempu.

Mina` hu mente fina`pus ha`ane pot huli`e na guaha dibin Marianas $1.6 Biyon pesus—ya sige mas ma-umenta—kulan mohon no siakassu. Gi mismu tiempu ma-anunsia na guaha lamegai soblante gi kaha. Taimanu para u guaha soblante `nai madidibi CUC mas ke $73 miyon pesus? Ni patten Marianas $14 miyon gi Medicaid to ma-apapase pot dos años na tiempu.

Debi u guaha finetmat mabisita monedan iya Marianas. Pot fabot atan haf` hagas yan presente na dibi yan kau sufisiente rinikohen aduana (tax) para apas obligasion.

Soluke guaha este na inadahe kase puru che`chu` kinibrutu `nai tafa` nuebu na kuttura i diskuidu. Pot fabot atan obligasionta gi hospitat yan eskuela siha. Estague` `nai gaige kakatneña i gastu.

Chenot: Umasudayu` yan un` primuhu. Huli`e na mampos mayaye. Hu faisen haf` guaha, ilegña nina`ye-gue` chenot lahe (prostate). Pot payun ham kuentos frihon hu atotga fumaisen para u esplika chenotña. Pot grasia hafana`an chenot dadeg.

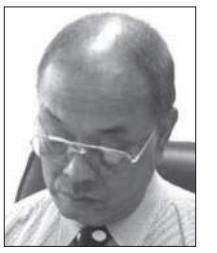
Hu tulaika i konbetsasion pot kanset ayu na pinadese. In` bira ham tatte gi man-mañge` siha na hagas asuntun mame. Kontodu tañgan cheluña hafa chaleg, "Hekua` haf bisnesña este man-oppe telefon". Dios mihu!

Peskadot: Sumugu` un` peskadot gi kantun chalan ha rikononose amiguña. Hali`e na mehna mafute`. Mafaisen pot kinine`ña. Ilegña na hahatsa un` dañkulun falut Magellan gi fihon Agiñgan ya mañiñila ha` kandetña. Sinañgane ni amiguña na u fañule dies na mafute` ya una` seguru na ha punu` i kandet i falut. Dios mihu!

Chatmediku: Umasoda-yu` yan amiguhu gi hospitat. Hafaisen-yu` haf` na kulan inipus-yu` mayaye. Hu sañgane na palu pot chenot daibies—mames haga`. Ha akonseha-yu` na bai` chochu asiga. A`saina!

Hu repara na chumichichi` pot chenot dinalag. Antes de bai` diñgu hu abisa na u fan dalalag dimas de u sede madalalag! Hihot me`mi` kumegu`ot tatte chalegña.

By JOHN S. DELROSARIO JR.
Special to the Saipan Tribune



John DelRosario Jr. is a former publisher of the Saipan Tribune *and a former secretary of the Department of Public Lands. All views expressed by the author are his/her own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion and stance of the* Saipan Tribune*.*

Stormy Daniels interview takes us to new level of shame

The "60 Minutes" interview with adult film star Stormy Daniels took us to a new level of media degradation Sunday.

And that's on President Donald Trump, not Daniels or "60 Minutes."

I praise "60 Minutes" for chasing this story as hard as it can. The alleged relationship between Trump and Daniels and the alleged cover-up of it by Trump's attorney Michael Cohen are hugely important stories for what they tell us about the president's sense of morality and the behavior of those closest to him.

Daniels made plenty of allegations that are sure to generate buzz and strong emotions:

The future president being spanked by a porn star—with a magazine with his face on the cover?

The future president having unprotected sex?

The future president telling Daniels she "reminded" him of his daughter?

This is where Trump's presidency has taken us.

The White House plays a huge role in shaping the national conversation. This interview exemplifies how Trump has shaped that conversation in a steadily downward and debased direction since his pre-presidency attacks on Rosie O'Donnell, straight through the "Access Hollywood" tape that had him boasting about sexually assaulting women.

Here's the TV takeaway from the "60 Minutes" interview: Daniels did not come off as some whackadoo. She came off as someone who has been rattled by the alleged threats from Team Trump, but who has thought through her decision to go public and is not about to back down.

Stormy Daniels says threats kept her quiet about alleged Trump affair until now

The "60 Minutes" cameras are famous for the way they can frame a speaker's face, creep in and out of close-up, focus on a body movement to suggest without words whether someone is telling the truth. It can be as subtle as a twitching leg, clenched fist or flickering eyelid.

Overall, the cameras viewed Daniels, whose real name is Stephanie Clifford, and depicted her in a credible manner.

Anderson Cooper, one of the best interviewers on TV, asked tough questions and follow-ups that challenged her credibility, and she handled them.

Trump representatives have denied Daniels' allegations. But the bottom line: This interview spells trouble for Trump on three fronts.

First, it offers more fodder for the depiction of Trump as sexual predator and creep—particularly the detail that Daniels allegedly spanked him with a magazine featuring him on the cover. And he used the false promise of a spot on his "Apprentice" TV show to get Daniels alone in a hotel room, she said.

Second, the threatening behavior by Trump associates that Daniels alleged furthers a very strong narrative of the president using such characters to threaten people into silence.

The account Daniels gave of a man coming upon her in a parking lot as she was taking her infant daughter out of the car, saying it would "be a shame" if something happened to the child's mother, is chilling and repulsive. But it also fits with the way some reporters have been threatened by Team Trump.

The fact that more people are not shocked that such threats are allegedly being made by Trump associates is further evidence of how degraded our culture has become with him in the White House. These are the words and actions similar to low-level criminals in the mob or jackbooted followers of fascist leaders in 1930s Europe, not the president of the United States in 2018. But there they were being sounded on national TV Sunday night.

And, finally, Daniels' account of her dealings with Cohen and the $130,000 he reportedly paid her to remain silent about the alleged affair on the eve of the 2016 presidential election could open Trump and Cohen to a world of trouble under federal election laws.

Hail to the chief.

By DAVID ZURAWIK
The Baltimore Sun

MARCH

From Page 10

to buy or sell an assault-style rifle in this state, and county sheriffs can deny concealed weapon permits to applicants who do not make a plausible case for why they need one. So Capitol Hill isn't the only pressure point for gun control; statehouses across the country should be pushed as well. Many gun owners say they disagree with the absolutist positions of the NRA; this would be a good time to join with those seeking reforms to establish a common ground that could help marginalize the NRA's lobbying and ballot-box influence, especially in states with a long history of hunting-rooted gun culture.

And we have to recognize, too, that while massacres such as the one in Parkland, Fla., grab the nation's attention, our biggest daily gun risk comes from one-on-one encounters involving people we know. Murder-suicides occur all too easily in moments of domestic violence just because a gun is within reach. Middle-aged white males, who as a group traditionally are the largest bloc of support for 2nd Amendment rights, also are at the highest risk of killing themselves with their weapons.

Still, it is the massacres that might move the political needle. We've been in a similar place before—the outpouring of anger and grief that followed the Sandy Hook Elementary School massacre felt like a galvanizing moment. But it dissipated as the grief faded. We can't let that happen again. This is a moment that must be seized and, finally, converted into meaningful change.

(c)2018 Los Angeles Times

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY
Partly sunny with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.
▲88° ▼77°

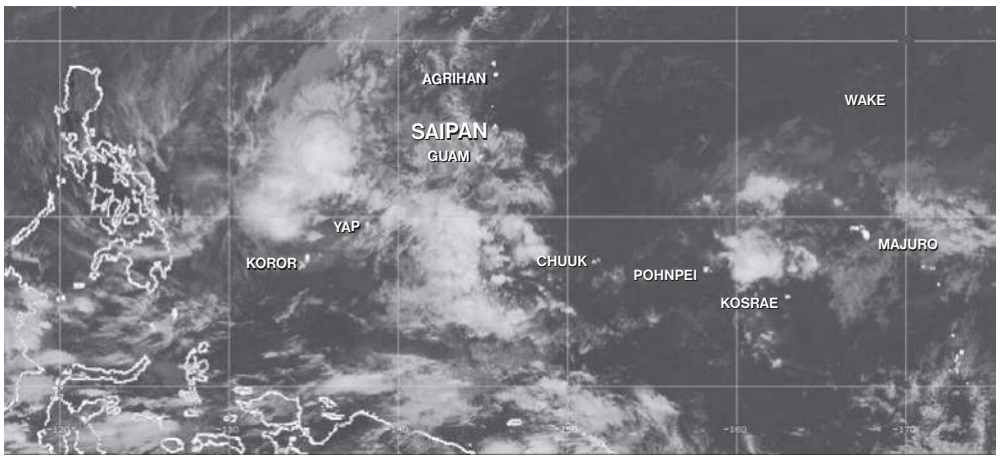
THURSDAY
Mostly cloudy with scattered showers. Southeast winds 10 to 20 mph.
▲87° ▼76°

FRIDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲87° ▼76°

SATURDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲87° ▼77°

SUNDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲87° ▼77°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 9:59 AM, TUESDAY, MARCH 26, 2018
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Overnight scatterometer data indicated winds of 20 to 25 kt in the surrounding waters. Airport observations have shown increasing winds since around sunrise with frequent gusts between 25 and 30 kt. Have issued a small craft advisory for the Marianas through Wednesday afternoon. Strong winds will cause seas to be quite choppy from a large wind wave component. Winds will decrease slightly overnight, but increase again Wednesday, so have just kept SCA up through Wednesday. Models show winds substantially decreasing by Wednesday night. Due to stronger winds today, a Red Flag Warning was also issued. The Fire Weather Watch, originally to expire this evening has been extended through Wednesday afternoon. Expected showers Wednesday night should bring some relief to the ongoing dryness of Guam and slightly alleviate the fire danger in the short term. Unfortunately, models show little indication that showers will reach up into the CNMI.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA		▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorm	86° / 76°
Palau	Partly Cloudy	87° / 78°
Yap	Partly Cloudy	86° / 79°
Chuuk	Partly Cloudy	86° / 79°
Pohnpei	Thunderstorm	84° / 78°
Kosrae	Thunderstorm	84° / 78°
Majuro	Thunderstorm	83° / 78°

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Showers	72° / 63°
Beijing	Mostly Sunny	68° / 39°
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	75° / 68°
Honolulu	Sunny	81° / 69°
London	Rain	48° / 36°
Los Angeles	Sunny	78° / 55°
Manila	Partly Cloudy	91° / 75°
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	73° / 50°
Miami	Partly Cloudy	75° / 70°
New York	Showers	47° / 45°
Osaka	Sunny	72° / 50°
Paris	Rain	52° / 36°
Busan	Mostly Sunny	66° / 52°
Rome	Showers	61° / 52°
Salem	Mostly Cloudy	80° / 58°
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	65° / 51°
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	64° / 46°
Tokyo	Partly Cloudy	72° / 52°
Washington, DC	Showers	67° / 56°

NMI CRIME STOPPERS
Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:
- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.net

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
5:57 AM	HIGH TIDE	1.88
11:42 AM	LOW TIDE	0.97
4:50 PM	HIGH TIDE	1.78
11:52 PM	LOW TIDE	-0.12

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:15 AM	6:28 PM
Thursday	6:15 AM	6:28 PM
Friday	6:14 AM	6:29 PM
Saturday	6:13 AM	6:29 PM
Sunday	6:12 AM	6:29 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	3:34 am	3:28 pm
Thursday	-	4:24 am	4:27 pm
Friday	-	5:12 am	5:24 pm
Saturday	-	5:57 am	6:19 pm
Sunday	-	6:41 am	7:13 pm

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF DECEMBER 19, 2017

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA6394	4:15am	5:05am	Daily
UA6392	8:40am	9:30am	Daily
UA6391	1:30pm	3:10pm	1, 4, 5, 7 via Rota
UA6390	2:20pm	3:10pm	2, 3, 6
UA6398	6:05pm	6:55pm	Daily
UA6396	9:50pm	10:40pm	Daily

SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP)

UA6391	1:30pm	2:05pm	1, 4, 5, 7

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM)

UA6391	2:35pm	3:10pm	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

DL297	4:20pm	7:15pm	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

7C3451	3:10am	6:10am	1, 7
7C3451	4:00am	7:05am	4, 5

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

TW308	2:00am	6:05am	Daily
OZ626	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ626	2:50am	6:40am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
LJ652	3:40am	7:30am	1, 4, 5, 7
7C3403	4:45am	8:30am	Daily
7C3401	4:00pm	7:45pm	Daily

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

3U8648	5:40am	8:40am	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-HANGZHOU (HGH)

JD396	7:30am	12:00pm	1
JD396	4:50pm	10:00pm	4

SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)

3U8646	4:20am	7:30am	2, 6

SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)

MU764	1:30am	6:35am	3, 5, 7

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ626/701	2:10am	10:55am	1 via ICN
OZ626/701	2:50am	10:55am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA6394/191	4:15am	9:00am	2, 3, 6, 7 via GUM
UA6394/PR111	4:15am	8:10am	7 via GUM
UA6394/PR111	4:15am	9:20am	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via GUM
UA6398/183	6:05pm	9:40pm	2, 5 via GUM
UA6398/183	6:05pm	9:50pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA6398/193	6:05pm	11:50pm	2, 5 via GUM-ROR

SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)

HX077	1:50am	5:15am	1, 4
OZ626/721	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN
OZ626/721	2:50am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UO43	5:45am	8:40am	1, 3, 5, 7
UA6398/159	6:05pm	11:00pm	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA6393	2:45am	3:35am	Daily
UA6395	7:15am	8:05am	Daily
UA6391	12:10pm	1:00pm	1, 4, 5, 7
UA6390	12:10pm	1:50pm	2, 3, 6 via Rota
UA6397	4:45pm	5:35pm	Daily
UA6399	8:30pm	9:20pm	Daily

GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP)

UA6390	12:10pm	12:45pm	2, 3, 6

ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN

UA6390	1:15pm	1:50pm	2, 3, 6

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

DL298	10:30am	3:05pm	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

7C3452	9:00pm	2:10am+1	4
7C3452	9:05pm	2:10am+1	3, 6, 7

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3402	9:30am	3:00pm	Daily
OZ625	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
TW307	7:45pm	1:00am+1	Daily
OZ625	8:20pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
LJ651	9:10pm	2:40am+1	3, 4, 6, 7
7C3404	10:10pm	3:40am+1	Daily

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

3U8647	10:20pm	4:30am+1	3, 4, 6, 7

HANGZHOU (HGH)-SAIPAN

JD395	8:25am	3:30pm	4
JD395	9:55pm	5:00am+1	7

GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN

3U8645	7:40pm	3:00am+1	1, 5

BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN

MU763	4:25pm	12:30am+1	2, 4, 6

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA182/6395	12:40am	8:05am	3, 6 via GUM
UA190/6397	9:55am	5:35pm	2, 3, 6, 7 via GUM
OZ702/625	12:25pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/625	12:25pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
PR110/UA6395	10:05pm	8:05am+1	Daily via GUM
UA192/6395	10:30pm	8:05am+1	2, 5 via ROR-GUM
UA184/6395	10:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM

HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN

OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
HX076	5:15pm	12:15am+1	3, 7
UO42	6:50pm	1:45am+1	7
UO42	9:30pm	4:25am+1	2, 4, 6
UA116/6395	11:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U Sichuan Airlines, 7C Jeju Air, DL Delta Airlines, JD Beijing Capital, UO HK Express, HX HongKong Airlines, LJ Jin Air, MU China Eastern, OZ Asiana Airlines, TW t'way Air, UA United Airlines, PR PAL Express; ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The* Saipan Tribune *is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	7:30AM	8:00AM	Daily
1302	11:30AM	12:00PM	Daily
1303	4:00PM	4:30PM	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101	8:15AM	8:45AM	Daily
3102	1:45PM	2:15PM	Daily
3103	4:45PM	5:15PM	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15PM	12:45PM	Daily

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	1:00PM	1:30PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00AM	7:15AM	Daily
1202	8:00AM	8:15AM	Daily
1203	9:00AM	9:15AM	Daily
1204	10:00AM	10:15AM	Daily
1205	11:00AM	11:15AM	Daily
1206	12:00PM	12:15PM	Daily
1207	1:00PM	1:15PM	Daily
1208	2:00PM	2:15PM	Daily
1209	3:00PM	3:15PM	Daily
1210	4:00PM	4:15PM	Daily
1211	5:00PM	5:15PM	Daily
1212	6:00PM	6:15PM	Daily

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2102	7:30AM	7:45AM	Daily
2103	8:30AM	8:45AM	Daily
2104	9:30AM	9:45AM	Daily
2105	10:30AM	10:45AM	Daily
2106	11:30AM	11:45AM	Daily
2107	12:30PM	12:45PM	Daily
2108	1:30PM	1:45PM	Daily
2109	2:30PM	2:45PM	Daily
2110	3:30PM	3:45PM	Daily
2111	4:30PM	4:45PM	Daily
2112	5:30PM	5:45PM	Daily
2113	6:30PM	6:45PM	Daily

CODEL Visits the CNMI

Press secretary Kevin Bautista, right, speaks with Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan's (Ind-MP) chief of staff Bob Schwalbach while Sablan's wife, Andrea, and Lt. Gov. Victor B. Hocog talk in the background while waiting for the congressional delegation to arrive yesterday. ERWIN ENCINARES

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, with first lady Diann Torres, Lt. Gov. Victor B. Hocog, Villia Marie Hocog, and others wait for the congressional delegation led by U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) to disembark from their aircraft from Tinian. ERWIN ENCINARES

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) poses with staff Tina Sablan, left, wife Andrea Sablan, second left, and chief of staff Bob Schwalbach, far right, at the tarmac of the Francisco C. Ada-Saipan International Airport. ERWIN ENCINARES

U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) greets CNMI legislative officers House Speaker Rafael Demapan (R-Saipan) and Senate President Arnold I. Palacios (R-Saipan) at the tarmac of the Francisco C. Ada-Saipan International Airport. ERWIN ENCINARES

Lt. Gov. Victor B. Hocog shakes the hand of U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) as a gaggle of officials welcome the other members of the delegation to Saipan. ERWIN ENCINARES

ERWIN ENCINARES

From left, Andrea Sablan, Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP), House Speaker Rafael Demapan (R-Saipan), Senate President Arnold I. Palacios (R-Saipan), Delegate Aumua Amata C. Radewagen (R-AS), Verne Martell, U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, first lady Diann Torres, Lt. Gov. Victor B. Hocog, Villia Marie M. Hocog, and Joint Region Marianas commander Navy Rear Adm. Shoshana Chatfield pose for a picture at the tarmac of the Francisco C. Ada-Saipan International Airport.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) poses with Sen. Jude Hofschneider (R-Tinian), right, during her brief visit to Tinian yesterday.

U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) steps down from the aircraft as her husband, Verne Martell, and Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) disembarks. ERWIN ENCINARES

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP), left, greets Senate President Arnold I. Palacios (R-Saipan) yesterday at the tarmac of the Francisco C. Ada-Saipan International Airport. ERWIN ENCINARES

Members of the Tinian leadership, which includes Tinian Mayor Joey Patrick San Nicolas, Sens. Jude Hofschneider (R-Tinian), Francisco Borja (R-Tinian), and Francisco Cruz (R-Tinian), welcomed Murkowski to Tinian yesterday. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

A *mwar* (head lei) is placed on Murkowski's head to welcome her to Saipan. ERWIN ENCINARES

Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) greets Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan's (Ind-MP) chief of staff Bob Schwalbach yesterday at the tarmac of the Francisco C. Ada International Airport. ERWIN ENCINARES

Business

AZ governor suspends Uber from autonomous testing

PHOENIX (AP)—Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey suspended Uber's self-driving vehicle testing privileges Monday in the wake of a pedestrian fatality in a Phoenix suburb last week.

Ducey said in a letter to CEO Dara Khosrowshahi that video footage of the crash raised concerns about the San Francisco-based company's ability to safely test its technology in Arizona. He said he expects public safety to be the top priority for those who operate self-driving cars.

"The incident that took place on March 18 is an unquestionable failure to comply with this expectation," Ducey said.

The move by the Republican governor marks a major step back from his embrace of self-driving vehicles. He previously welcomed Uber and other autonomous vehicle companies to use Arizona as a place for testing under few, if any, regulations. In early March, he authorized self-driving vehicle companies to run tests without a person in the car to act as a safety operator.

On March 21, police in Tempe released a 22-second video showing a woman walking from a darkened area onto a street just before an Uber SUV strikes her. The Volvo was in self-driving mode with a human backup driver at the wheel when it struck 49-year-old Elaine Herzberg, police said.

AP

This image made from video Sunday, March 18, 2018, of a mounted camera provided by the Tempe Police Department shows an interior view moments before an Uber SUV hit a woman in Tempe, Ariz.

The human backup driver appears to be looking down until just before the time of the impact.

The fatal crash in Tempe was the first fatality involving a self-driving vehicle in the United States.

Uber immediately suspended its self-driving vehicle testing in Arizona, Pittsburgh, San Francisco and Toronto.

If Uber resumes its self-driving vehicle testing, the governor's decision means the company will still be prevented from doing so in Arizona, said Ducey's spokesman Daniel Scarpinato.

Uber released a statement that said it will "continue to help investigators in any way we can, and we'll keep a dialogue open with the Governor's office to address any concerns they have."

The crash is being investigated by Tempe police, the National Transportation Safety Board and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Experts who viewed the video told The Associated Press that the SUV's sensors should have seen the woman pushing a bicycle and braked before the impact even though it was at night.

On Friday, The New York Times reported that the company's own documents showed the testing program was rife with issues. They included trouble driving through construction zones and requiring far more human intervention than competing companies.

In Arizona, companies such as Uber only need to carry minimum liability insurance to operate self-driving cars. They are not required to track crashes or report any information to the state.

Scarpinato said Monday that Ducey considers self-driving vehicles a way to improve public safety and limit road fatalities.

"We see real long-term benefits to it, and we want to know more about this incident, whether it was an outlier or not," he said. But he wouldn't say if the governor regretted not having state reporting requirements that could have given advance warning of the problems with Uber's program reported by the New York Times.

FTC, states increase pressure on Facebook on privacy

NEW YORK (AP)—U.S. regulators and state attorneys general are increasing pressure on Facebook as they probe whether the company's data-collection practices have hurt the people who use its services.

The Federal Trade Commission confirmed news reports on Monday that it was investigating the company. Separately, the attorneys general for 37 U.S. states and territories sought details Monday on how Facebook monitored what app developers did with data collected on Facebook users and whether Facebook had safeguards to prevent misuse.

Facebook's privacy practices have come under fire after revelations that a Trump-affiliated consulting firm, Cambridge Analytica, got data on millions of Facebook users. That included information on friends of people who had downloaded a psychological quiz app, even though those friends hadn't given explicit consent to sharing.

Facebook is also facing questions about reports that it collected years of contact names, telephone numbers, call lengths and information about text messages from Android users. Facebook says the data is used "to improve people's experience across Facebook" by helping to connect with others. But the company did not spell out exactly what it used the data for or why it needed it.

European officials also have also been investigating or seeking more information. Germany's justice minister said Monday that she wants closer oversight of companies such as Facebook after a meeting with its executives about the abuse of users' data. Last week, a U.K. parliamentary media committee summoned CEO Mark Zuckerberg to testify about how Facebook uses data, while U.K. Information Commissioner Elizabeth Denham is investigating how Cambridge Analytica got the data.

In addition, the state's attorney of Cook County in Illinois has sued Facebook and Cambridge Analytica for consumer fraud after revelations that the latter obtained data on millions of Facebook users. Facebook has not commented on the lawsuit.

The recent troubles follow Facebook's most difficult year yet, as the company dealt with fake news, "filter bubbles" that lead to increasing polarization, and congressional hearings over Russian agents' alleged use of social media to meddle with the 2016 presidential elections.

Wynn Resorts hearing may include alleged sexual misconduct

LAS VEGAS (AP)—Lawyers will present evidence they say shows disgraced casino mogul Steve Wynn's pattern of reckless behavior and mismanagement of Wynn Resorts during a hearing scheduled to begin Tuesday in state court in Las Vegas. It's the latest move in a yearslong case involving him, his ex-wife and the company they founded.

The hearing could feature previous deposition testimony as well as live witnesses, including Elaine Wynn, who has accused her ex-husband, the company's general counsel and members of its board of directors of getting her off the board in 2015 because of her inquiries into company activities. Her contract-related claims are what is left of a broader case that began in 2012.

A portion of the fight between the Wynns ended earlier this month when an agreement that stipulated that they would vote jointly on company matters was deemed legally invalid. These came weeks after Steve Wynn resigned as chairman and CEO of the casino-operating company amid sexual misconduct allegations that were first reported by the Wall Street Journal.

The newspaper reported two months ago that several women said the billionaire harassed or assaulted them and that one case led to a $7.5 million settlement with a manicurist formerly employed by the company. Other allegations and a settlement with a different employee have since surfaced.

Steve Wynn, 76, has vehemently denied the allegations the newspaper reported and attributed them to Elaine Wynn, whose attorney has denied that she instigated the news report.

Tuesday's hearing was set after the judge denied a motion from Steve Wynn's attorneys that sought to exclude from the trial the settlement he entered with the manicurist in 2005; alleged misuse of company resources including aircraft, Rolex watches and Ferrari automobiles; alleged illegal gambling and other misconduct by two company executives; and other issues.

"They'd like to try a case about sex, sexual harassment, illegal gambling, any other allegations that they can throw around without there being any evidence to link those allegations to the claims that she has asserted in this case," Todd Bice, an attorney Wynn Resorts, said during a March 16 hearing.

STOCK PORTFOLIO

LEADING INDICATORS

DOW	S&P	NASDAQ
24,202.60	2,658.55	7,220.54
+669.40	+70.29	+227.88
+2.84%	+2.72%	+3.26%

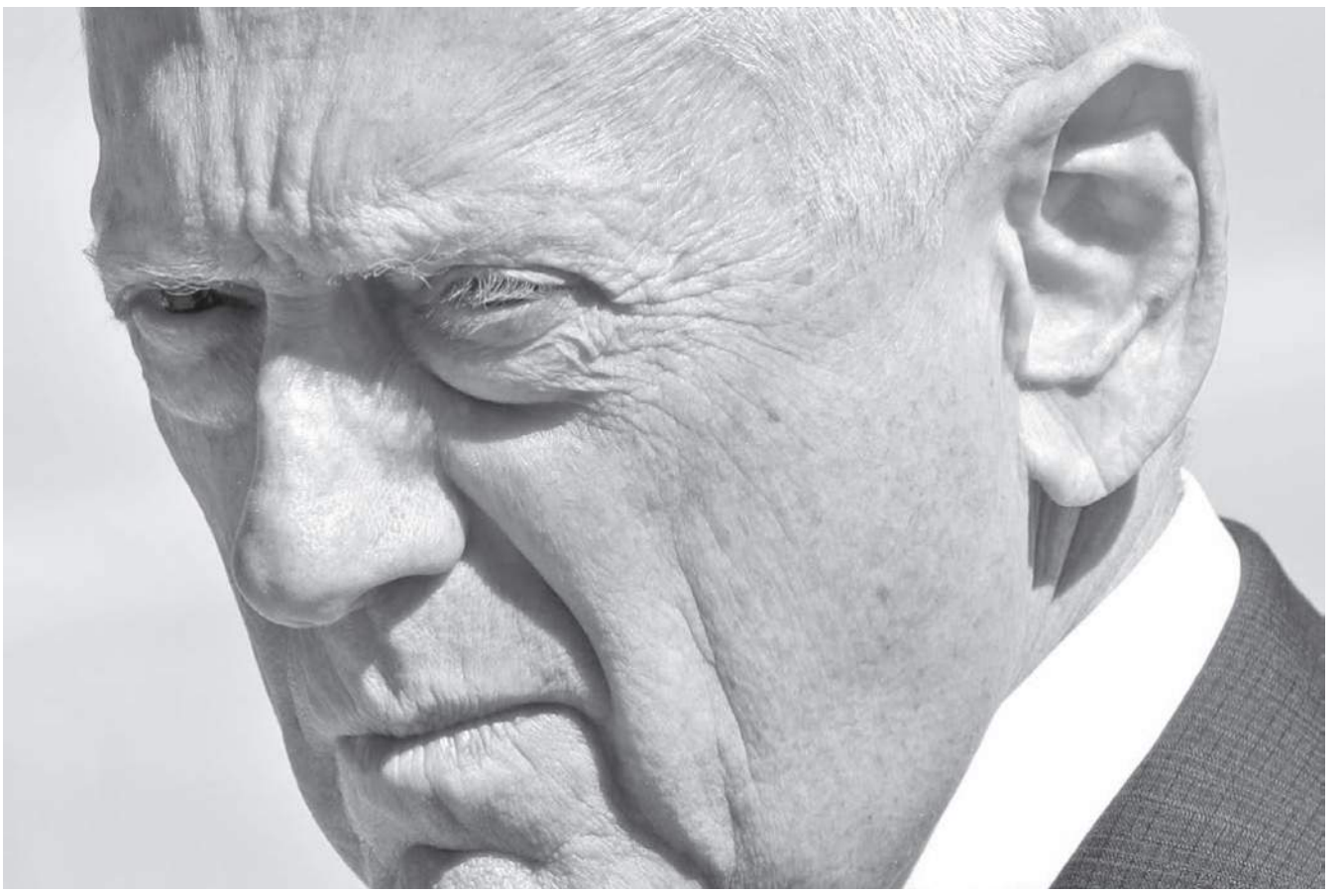
EXCHANGE RATES

In U.S. dollar terms

Australian Dollar	1.29	Hong Kong Dollar	7.85	Russian Ruble	57.15
British Pound	0.7028	Indian Rupee	64.81	Singapore Dollar	1.31
Canadian Dollar	1.28	Japanese Yen	105.68	South Korean Won	1068.44
Chinese Yuan	6.25	Malaysian Ringgit	3.87	Swiss Franc	0.95
Euro	0.8033	New Zealand Dollar	1.37	Taiwan Dollar	28.92
		Philippine Peso	52.19	Thailand Baht	31.13

Nation

Mattis appears isolated as Trump adds hawkish Bolton



AP
Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis awaits the arrival of Indonesia's Minister of Foreign Affairs Retno Marsudi, Monday, March 26, 2018, at the Pentagon.

WASHINGTON (AP)—Of the issues that divide Defense Secretary Jim Mattis and President Donald Trump's incoming national security adviser, John Bolton, one stands out: North Korea.

Bolton, who will replace Army Lt. Gen. H.R. McMaster on April 9, has publicly advocated for overthrowing the North Korean government. Mattis, a retired Marine general who knows intimately the costs of war, favors diplomacy to rid the North of its nuclear weapons and has said war on the Korean peninsula would be "catastrophic." On Iran, too, Mattis would seem at odds with Bolton, who has argued for abandoning the Obama-era nuclear deal.

These and other matters of war and peace will test Mattis' influence with Trump as his national security team is overhauled.

Mattis was sometimes at odds with McMaster, but the arrival of the hawkish Bolton, combined with the firing of Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and the uncertain status of John Kelly as White House chief of staff, appears to leave Mattis more isolated than at any time since he took over the Pentagon 15 months ago. Often described as a steadying or moderating influence on the impulsive Trump, Mattis has little previous relationship with Bolton.

The North Korea issue is front-and-center: Trump has agreed to meet with North Korean President Kim Jong Un by May to discuss the North's nuclear disarmament. The unprecedented summit could be a turning point in a decades-old U.S.-North Korean standoff that Trump himself has said could end in "fire and fury"—an American nuclear attack—to stop the North from gaining the ability to strike the U.S. with a nuclear missile.

"This is buckle-up time," retired Navy Adm. James Stavridis, dean of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, said last week on MSNBC. "For the military I have three words: Sharpen your swords. He (Bolton) is someone who is going to reach for the military instrument."

The changes in the White House and at the State Department, while significant for Mattis, are hardly heart-stopping. People close to him sense no change in his commitment to the job; some suggest that Trump's decision to move former Republican congressman and current CIA director Mike Pompeo to State, replacing Tillerson, could benefit Mattis in the sense that he'll have a partner at State who is better aligned with Trump.

Publicly, Mattis has said little about the shakeup. He was in Afghanistan when Tillerson got the ax. When reporters asked his reaction a couple of days later, Mattis said he preferred not to comment on the details, although he went on to suggest that its importance was being exaggerated. He said that in all of his discussions abroad with foreign government officials and American troops, the matter was not brought up once.

"I understand why you're asking, but I'm just pointing out that in most parts of the world this is a Washington, D.C. story," he said.

Another Washington story is Mattis and his ability to forge a workable relationship with Trump despite differences on some issues like the Iran nuclear deal, which Mattis says is flawed but worth honoring as long as the Iranians do. Mattis also has differed with the president over Trump's wish to bar all transgender people from serving in the military, and he helped sway Trump from his inclination last year to end U.S. military involvement in Afghanistan.

Kansas girl at center of 1954 school segregation ruling dies

Brown

TOPEKA, Kan. (AP)—Linda Brown, who as a Kansas girl was at the center of the landmark U.S. Supreme Court ruling that struck down racial segregation in schools, has died at age 75.

Her father, Oliver Brown, tried to enroll the family in an all-white school in Topeka, and the case was sparked when he and several black families were turned away. The NAACP's legal arm brought the lawsuit to challenge segregation in public schools, and Oliver Brown became lead plaintiff in the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education decision by the Supreme Court that ended school segregation.

Sherrilyn Ifill, president and director-counsel at NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc., said in a statement that Linda Brown is one of a band of heroic young people who, along with her family, courageously fought to end the ultimate symbol of white supremacy—racial segregation in public schools.

"She stands as an example of how ordinary schoolchildren took center stage in transforming this country. It was not easy for her or her family, but her sacrifice broke barriers and changed the meaning of equality in this country," Ifill said.

Peaceful Rest Funeral Chapel of Topeka confirmed Linda Brown's age and that she died Sunday afternoon. No cause of death was released. Funeral arrangements are pending.

Her sister, Cheryl Brown Henderson, founding president of The Brown Foundation, confirmed the death to The Topeka Capital-Journal. She declined comment from the family.

The landmark case was brought before the Supreme Court by the NAACP's legal arm to challenge segregation in public schools. It began after several black families in Topeka were turned down when they tried to enroll their children in white schools near their homes. The lawsuit was joined with cases from Delaware, South Carolina, Virginia and the District of Columbia.

On May 17, 1954, the Supreme Court ruled unanimously that separating black and white children was unconstitutional because it denied black children the 14th Amendment's guarantee of equal protection under the law. "In the field of public education, the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place," Chief Justice Earl Warren wrote. "Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal."

No tampons in prison? #MeToo helps shine light on issue

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (AP)—Kimberly Haven couldn't get the feminine hygiene products she needed in Maryland's only prison for women while serving a 15-month sentence, so she made her own using toilet paper. She said that after her release in 2015, she suffered toxic shock syndrome and needed an emergency hysterectomy.

"Toxic shock, emergency hysterectomies—it runs the gamut of how women are forced to pay for, with their very health, our bad policies and our inattention to the gender disparities that exist within our system," Haven said.

Fueled in part by the national #MeToo movement, state legislatures around the country—as well as corrections officials and the federal government—are working to supply prisons and jails with adequate feminine hygiene products, train staff, and raise awareness of the longtime, widespread issue.

In Maryland, both chambers passed legislation March 1 to put required free access to menstrual products into law. The measures are nearly identical, so supporters don't see an impediment to a final vote needed by each chamber to send the legislation to Gov. Larry Hogan.

"I think that there is a wave, and I think there's a lot of attention that's being paid now to women, period—whether that's #MeToo, whether that's Time's Up," the anti-sexual harassment movement in Hollywood, said Monica Cooper, a former inmate who is the co-founder of the Maryland Justice Project, an advocacy group that focuses on the effects of the criminal justice system on women. "So, it's something that's coming to a town near you."

Amy Fettig, deputy director for the American Civil Liberties Union's National Prison Project, says the issue has emerged in the past year as part of a larger conversation about women in prison that simply wasn't happening five to 10 years ago. The project works to ensure the nation's prisons, jails and detention centers comply with the Constitution and international human rights principles.

"Even though women have been the largest increasing portion of the criminal justice system for two decades, they still are a relatively small portion compared to men, and so their needs and situations have been largely ignored, both in our criminal justice system and by the public at large, and that's finally beginning to change because of the work of advocacy groups," Fettig said. "I think it's also because of the larger #MeToo movement and awareness about women's status in this country and how far we still have to go, as well as popular culture."

As an example, Fettig cited a recent episode of "Orange is the New Black," a Netflix program about a woman's prison, that focused on the lack of tampon access in prison.

Virginia legislators passed a measure early this month. Lawmakers in Alabama, Arizona, and Connecticut have introduced bills.

Arizona's corrections department announced last month it would immediately triple the number of free sanitary napkins it automatically provides each month to female inmates to head off a proposal to provide unlimited free tampons, pads and other feminine hygiene products. As a result of the announcement, the legislation did not advance.

In Nebraska, corrections officials avoided the legislative process in January by announcing that generic tampons and pads would be provided for free and that it would charge inmates only for name-brand supplies. In Colorado last year, lawmakers included a provision in the state's budget bill to provide incarcerated women with free access to tampons.

Asia

Train's arrival in Beijing raises speculation of Kim visit

AP
Police and security officials stand guard as a motorcade travels along a road near the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing, Tuesday, March 27, 2018.

BEIJING (AP)—The arrival of a special train in Beijing and unusually heavy security at a guesthouse where prominent North Koreans have stayed in the past have raised speculation that Kim Jong Un is making his first visit to China as the North's leader.

Kim has summits planned with South Korean President Moon Jae-in in late April and with President Donald Trump by May. While there has been no word of a similar meeting with Chinese leaders, China has been one of North Korea's most important allies even though relations have chilled recently because of Kim's development of nuclear weapons and long-range missiles.

A vehicle convoy entered the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing on Monday evening and a military honor guard and heavy security were seen later. That followed reports from Japanese network NTV and public broadcaster NHK of a special North Korean train arriving in Beijing under unusually heavy security.

Shortly before 11 a.m. Tuesday, a convoy of official Chinese cars was seen leaving the east gate of guesthouse, heading in the direction of government offices and the city's two train stations.

City police and the paramilitary People's Armed Police stood guard in the area and unidentified men in plainclothes attempted to prevent photographers from taking pictures.

Cars in the convoy were identified by yellow stickers but carried no diplomatic license plates. The guesthouse had been the favored residence of Kim's father, North Korea's former leader Kim Jong Il.

A staffer with the Chinese foreign ministry's press office responded to a question about Kim's possible presence in Beijing by saying, "So far, I am not aware of the situation you mentioned."

Past visits by Kim Jong Il to China were surrounded in secrecy, with Beijing only confirming his presence after he had crossed the border by train back into North Korea.

A spokeswoman for the Chinese Foreign Ministry said she was not aware of the situation and had no further comment. North Korea's state-run media had no reports of a delegation traveling to China.

South Korea's presidential office said Tuesday that it could not confirm reports that the train carried Kim nor a separate report that Kim's sister was onboard.

South Korean analysts were doubtful the visitor is Kim Jong Un. Since succeeding his father as leader in 2011, Kim has touted an image of his country as diplomatic equal to China and it's unlikely he would sneak into Beijing for his first face-to-face meetings with the Chinese leadership, the analysts said.

They said it's more likely Kim sent a special envoy, possibly his sister Kim Yo Jong, to appease a traditional ally ahead of his planned meetings with the presidents of South Korea and the United States. The envoy could potentially seek Chinese commitment for future support should North Korea's talks with rivals fall through, said Du Hyeogn Cha, a visiting scholar at Seoul's Asan Institute for Policy Studies.

PH to patrol disputed shoal despite China protest

CAVITE, Philippines (AP)—The Philippine military said Monday it will continue aerial patrols of a Chinese-held shoal near the South China Sea despite protests from Beijing over the flights, especially using Japanese-donated aircraft.

When asked if the Philippine military will stop the surveillance of Scarborough Shoal following the protests from Beijing, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said the flights will continue because the area is within the Philippines' exclusive economic zone, giving the country internationally recognized sovereign rights.

"No, we will not. Those areas are within our EEZ. They're the ones who have no rights there," Lorenzana said.

China raised concerns over the patrols, including one that used a Japanese-donated TC-90 plane, when Chinese and Philippine officials met in Manila last month to discuss their territorial disputes in the South China Sea, said a Philippine official who was involved in the meeting.

The official spoke on condition of anonymity because of a lack of authority to discuss issues taken up during the closed-door meeting.

Japanese defense officials turned over the last three of five TC-90 aircraft to the Philippine navy in a ceremony witnessed by Lorenzana and top navy commanders at a naval base in Cavite province south of Manila on Monday.

The refurbished Beechcraft TC-90s, which can fly twice the distance that existing Philippine patrol aircraft can cover, will be used to respond to disasters and for patrols and surveillance, Lorenzana said in a speech in which he thanked the Japanese government.

Japan initially leased the TC-90s to the Philippines but later transferred them as a grant after restrictions on Japanese donations of excess defense and military equipment to allies and other countries were eased, he said.

Two of the aircraft were delivered in March last year and one was used by the Philippine navy for the first time in late January to patrol the Scarborough area, where it spotted nine Chinese vessels, including four Chinese coast guard ships, and four Philippine fishing boats, the military's Northern Luzon Command reported at the time.

Earlier in January, a U.S. guided missile destroyer sailed near Scarborough to assert freedom of navigation, sparking protests from China. Beijing said then that it would take "necessary measures" to protect its sovereignty after the USS Hopper sailed within 12 nautical miles of Scarborough without China's permission.

China took control of Scarborough in 2012 after a tense standoff with Philippine ships. The tiny, uninhabited reef is about 200 kilometers (120 miles) west of the main northern Philippine island of Luzon, and about 1,000 kilometers (620 miles) southeast of the Chinese coast.

Japan and the Philippines, which are locked in separate territorial disputes with China, signed a pact in March 2016 that allowed Japan to transfer defense equipment and technology to the Philippines in the latest sign of blossoming security ties.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Japanese official denies Abe pressure in school land deal

TOKYO (AP)—A former top Japanese finance official has denied that Prime Minister Shinzo Abe or his wife instructed bureaucrats to alter documents to erase signs of their role in a school land sale scandal, but left many key questions unanswered. Nobuhisa Sagawa apologized in testimony Tuesday over the document tampering at the department he headed last year. The land deal itself was made under his predecessor. Sagawa, accused of falsifying explanations last year, said he followed scripts prepared by his department and run by the Prime Minister's Office. Opposition lawmakers criticized Sagawa's silence, demanding Abe's wife, Akie, and others testify. The scandal relates to the 2016 state land sale to a school operator in Osaka at one-seventh of its appraised price with the alleged involvement of Akie Abe.

Myanmar army chief tells rebels to stop demanding impossible

NAYPYITAW, Myanmar (AP)—Myanmar's powerful army chief on Tuesday urged the country's ethnic rebel groups to agree to a comprehensive cease-fire agreement now and stop wasting time on demands he described as impossible. Speaking at the annual Armed Forces Day parade, Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing said decades of armed conflict with rebel groups had caused Myanmar's development to lag behind its neighbors. Myanmar's military ruled the country for a half-century during which it was accused of widespread abuses before partially handing power to a civilian government in 2016. It is still in charge of security matters and still faces accusations of rights abuses. The military has been firmly behind a formal National Ceasefire Agreement but only a few of the ethnic armies have signed up to it. Several of the most powerful have refused and want a re-negotiation as they continue to seek greater political and economic autonomy. Heavy combat continues intermittently in areas settled by the Kachin and the Shan, who insist they want a comprehensive political solution before laying down their arms.

Drone nearly hits plane landing in New Zealand from Japan

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP)—Air New Zealand said Tuesday that a drone came within meters of a flight descending into Auckland Airport from Tokyo, putting the safety of 278 passengers and crew at risk. After Sunday's incident, the national carrier is calling for prison terms for drone operators who endanger lives. Air New Zealand said the pilots of Flight NZ92 spotted the drone about 5 meters (16.4 feet) from their Boeing 777-200 at a point in their descent when it was impossible to take evasive action. The airline said the drone passed so close that the crew worried it had been sucked into an engine, although a later inspection showed that hadn't happened. "It's clear the time has now come for tougher deterrents for reckless drone use around airports to safeguard travelers," David Morgan, the airline's chief operations and integrity standards officer, said in a statement. He called for penalties to be imposed more consistently and also called for better education around drones. The airline said it was the second example of reckless drone use this month, after an Air New Zealand pilot reported the presence of a drone within controlled airspace on March 6 at Auckland Airport. That incident prompted the airport to halt all flights for 30 minutes.

World

US, allies band together to expel Russians over spy case

WASHINGTON (AP)—From Washington to Warsaw, Western nations banded together Monday to expel more than 100 Russian diplomats they accused of being spies, punishing Moscow for its alleged poisoning of an ex-intelligence officer in Britain.

President Donald Trump, under constant political heat for his reluctance to challenge Russia, ordered 60 of its diplomats out of the U.S. - all of them spies, the White House said. The United States called it the largest expulsion of Russian spies in American history, and also shuttered Russia's consulate in Seattle, deeming it a counterintelligence threat.

All told, at least 21 countries have ousted more than 135 Russians, including 23 kicked out earlier by the U.K.

"Together we have sent a message that we will not tolerate Russia's continued attempts to flout international law and undermine our values," British Prime Minister Theresa May told Parliament.

The American moves illustrated an increased willingness by Trump's administration to push back on the Kremlin, even as the president himself steadfastly avoids challenging Russian President Vladimir Putin personally or directly. Less than a week ago, Trump congratulated Putin for his re-election but didn't raise the March 4 spy poisoning, Russia's alleged election-meddling in the U.S. or its own tainted voting process, prompting dismayed critiques even from Trump's fellow Republicans.

In a choreographed show of trans-Atlantic unity, the U.S. and European allies carefully timed their announcements for maximum effect.

Within a few hours, at least 16 European Union nations expelled Russians, with more likely to follow. Germany, Poland and France each said it planned to boot four Russian diplomats, the Czech Republic and Lithuania ousted three and Italy, two. Canada also took action, kicking out four Russians and denying three who have applied to enter the country.

The list included nations in Russia's backyard that have perhaps the most at stake. Ukraine, a non-EU country with its own conflicts with Moscow, was expelling 13 Russians. All three Baltic states said they would make diplomats leave.

Almost all of the countries said publicly that those being expelled were actually Russians intelligence operatives working under diplomatic cover.

Moscow threatened retaliation of the tit-for-tat variety, suggesting it would kick out an equal number of foreign diplomats. Russia's Embassy in Washington responded to the Seattle consulate closure by asking its Twitter followers to "vote" which U.S. consulate should be shuttered in turn: St. Petersburg, Yekaterinburg or Vladivostok.

"This is an attempt on the lives of Russian citizens on the territory of Great Britain," Russia's Foreign Ministry said. "It goes without saying that this unfriendly move by this group of countries will not go unnoticed."

Yet it was unclear whether the expulsions, which may be inconvenient for Moscow but don't take aim at its economy, would be enough to alter Putin's behavior.

"There is no actual deterrence and squeeze," said James Nixey, head of the Russia program at think-tank Chatham House. "There is, so far, no cyber-response, no financial response."

Still, the dueling allegations added to a serious escalation of tension and distrust between Russia and the West, intensified most recently by a bizarre poisoning this month that evoked the spy-vs.-spy rivalries of the Cold War.

Britain has accused Moscow of using the Soviet-developed nerve agent Novichok to poison Sergei Skripal, a former Russian military intelligence officer convicted of spying for the U.K., and his daughter, Yulia, on British soil. The two remain in critical condition and unconscious. The U.S., France and Germany have agreed it's highly likely Russia was responsible. Russia has denied responsibility, while accusing Britain of leading a global charge against it without proof.

The expulsions came with a chorus of condemnation for the Kremlin—for the poisoning, Russian spying and other Western grievances. Poland's Foreign Minister, Jacek Czaputowicz, called it "the right response to the unfriendly, aggressive actions of Russia." In the Czech Republic, where Russian officials have claimed the poison may have originated, Prime Minister Andrej Babis dismissed that allegation as "an utter lie."

And the United States warned of an "unacceptably high" number of Russian spies in the U.S., describing them as a national security threat. Among the 60 Russians expelled were a dozen posted to Russia's mission to the United Nations who senior U.S. officials said were engaged in "aggressive collection" of intelligence on American soil.

"When we see these espionage tactics that are taking place right here at the heart of the U.N., we can't have that," said Nikki Haley, Trump's envoy to the U.N.

In Washington, Russia's ambassador was summoned early in the morning and told his diplomats have one week to leave the U.S. and must evacuate the Consulate General in Seattle by April 2. Located on the 25th floor of a large, downtown office building, the consulate is a particular counter-intelligence concern because of its close proximity to a U.S. submarine base and a Boeing Co. facility, said U.S. officials.

The officials said they estimated Russia had roughly 100 intelligence officials in the U.S., suggesting that dozens will remain even after the 60 are expelled. The officials weren't authorized to be identified by name and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Russia expects deal with major rebel group in Syria's Ghouta

BEIRUT (AP)—Russia's military said Monday it expects to reach an agreement with a major Syrian rebel group to arrange its exit from the last rebel-held town in eastern Ghouta in another key victory for President Bashar Assad's forces as they push to gain control of the region on the edge of Damascus.

Douma is the only town on the eastern outskirts of the Syrian capital still held by rebels, after government forces captured all other opposition areas they had besieged for years.

The town, controlled by the powerful Army of Islam, is also home to tens of thousands of people, including many who were displaced over the past weeks of heavy fighting.

Lt. Gen. Stanislav Gadzhimagomedov told Russian news agencies on Monday in Syria that Russia's military is in talks with the Army of Islam to discuss its withdrawal from Douma.

Gadzhimagomedov, who is the deputy head of the Chief Operational Department at the Russian General Staff, said he expects Russian troops to "take them out soon," and that the rebels have reportedly indicated their willingness to lay down arms.

However, the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said there are divisions within the rebel group over the negotiations, with some hard-liners refusing any talks with Russians. The Observatory said some fighters asked to be allowed to go to the southern province of Daraa, but that the Russians rejected this request.

Syria's pro-government Al-Watan daily said the Army of Islam and the Russians have reached an "understanding," adding that each side will study a draft agreement within the next three days.

Al-Watan quoted Syrian legislator Mohammed Kheir Seiryoul, who is originally from Douma, as saying that the understanding could lead to an agreement to dissolve the Army of Islam. During this period, its members would hand over their heavy weapons and the Syrian government would assume control of state institutions in the town.

Catalonia ex-leader to remain jailed during extradition case

NEUMUENSTER, Germany (AP)—Spain's showdown with Catalonia's separatist leaders moved Monday to German courts as the region's former president, Carles Puigdemont, embarked on what could be a weeks-long effort to avoid extradition from Germany.

A court in the northern town of Neumuenster ruled that Puigdemont, who was arrested Sunday in Germany, has to remain in custody for the length of the extradition proceedings.

The court said the formal requirements to detain Puigdemont had been met by a European arrest warrant issued by Spain.

In denying him bail, the court said Puigdemont posed a flight risk, concluding that he had "a strong incentive" to try to travel to Belgium where his chances of avoiding extradition might be greater.

Schleswig Holstein state prosecutor Georg Guentge said the former Catalan leader appeared "calm and composed" during Monday's hearing, at times making legal arguments on his own behalf.

Guentge said Puigdemont can challenge the legal basis for Spain's extradition request during the formal proceedings, which will now take place before the upper court in nearby Schleswig. Guentge said it isn't clear whether a decision on the extradition request will happen this week and in the meantime Puigdemont will remain at the prison in Neumuenster.

With tensions flaring back home, Spain's government said Puigdemont's arrest at a highway rest area south of the German-Danish border during an attempt to drive from Finland to Belgium shows that "nobody can infinitely mock justice."

Tens of thousands protested late Sunday in Barcelona and other Catalan towns, and some demonstrators clashed with riot police.

Spanish authorities accuse Puigdemont, 55, of rebellion and misuse of public funds in organizing an unauthorized referendum last year on independence for Catalonia.

German officials have stressed that the case is a matter for the judicial system, but declined to say whether the German government could ultimately overrule a court decision.

European rules call for a final decision on extradition within 60 days of the suspect's arrest, though a 30-day extension is possible, Justice Ministry spokeswoman Stephanie Krueger said.

Spain was plunged into its worst political crisis in four decades when Puigdemont's government flouted a court ban and held an ad-hoc referendum on independence for the northeastern region in October.

The Catalan parliament's subsequent declaration of independence received no international recognition and provoked a takeover of the regional government by Spanish authorities.

Spain originally asked for Puigdemont's extradition from Belgium after he fled there in October, but later withdrew the request until Spanish Supreme Court Judge Pablo Llarena concluded his investigation last week.

In the meantime, Puigdemont was free to make trips to Denmark, Switzerland and Finland, in an effort to gain international support for the secessionist movement.

The international arrest warrant for Puigdemont was reactivated on Friday, while he was visiting Finland. Spain has also issued five warrants for other separatists who fled the country.

Authorities examining a European arrest warrant must determine whether the offense a suspect is accused of committing is equivalent to a criminal offense in the country where he was arrested.

Germany's criminal code—unlike Belgium's—includes an offense that appears to be comparable to rebellion, the main accusation against Puigdemont. It calls for prison sentences for anyone who "undertakes, by force or through threat of force" to undermine the republic's existence or change its constitutional order.

Focus

Mueller probe witness secretly backed UAE agenda in Congress

By DESMOND BUTLER, TOM LoBIANCO and BRADLEY KLAPPER
ASSOCIATED PRESS

A top fundraiser for President Donald Trump received millions of dollars from a political adviser to the United Arab Emirates last April, just weeks before he began handing out a series of large political donations to U.S. lawmakers considering legislation targeting Qatar, the UAE's chief rival in the Persian Gulf, an Associated Press investigation has found.

George Nader, an adviser to the UAE who is now a witness in the U.S. special counsel investigation into foreign meddling in American politics, wired $2.5 million to the Trump fundraiser, Elliott Broidy, through a company in Canada, according to two people who spoke on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the matter. They said Nader paid the money to Broidy to bankroll an effort to persuade the U.S. to take a hard line against Qatar, a long-time American ally but now a bitter adversary of the UAE.

A month after he received the money, Broidy sponsored a conference on Qatar's alleged ties to Islamic extremism. During the event, Republican Congressman Ed Royce of California, the chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, announced he was introducing legislation that would brand Qatar as a terrorist-supporting state.

In July 2017, two months after Royce introduced the bill, Broidy gave the California congressman $5,400 in campaign gifts—the maximum allowed by law. The donations were part of just under $600,000 that Broidy has given to GOP members of Congress and Republican political committees since he began the push for the legislation fingering Qatar, according to an AP analysis of campaign finance disclosure records.

Broidy said in a statement to AP that he has been outspoken for years about militant groups, including Hamas.

"I've both raised money for, and contributed my own money to, efforts by think tanks to bring the facts into the open, since Qatar is spreading millions of dollars around Washington to whitewash its image as a terror-sponsoring state," he said. "I've also spoken to like-minded members of Congress, like Royce, about how to make sure Qatar's lobbying money does not blind lawmakers to the facts about its record in supporting terrorist groups."

While Washington is awash with political donations from all manner of interest groups and individuals, there are strict restrictions on foreign donations for political activity. Agents of foreign governments are also required to register before lobbying so that there is a public record of foreign influence.

Cory Fritz, a spokesman for Royce, said that his boss had long criticized the "destabilizing role of extremist elements in Qatar." He pointed to comments to that effect going back to 2014. "Any attempts to influence these longstanding views would have been unsuccessful," he said.

In October, Broidy also raised the issue of Qatar at the White House in meetings with Trump and senior aides.

The details of Broidy's advocacy on U.S. legislation have not been previously reported. The AP found no evidence that Broidy used Nader's funds for the campaign donations or broke any laws. At the time of the advocacy work, his company, Circinus, did not have business with the UAE, but was awarded a more than $200 million contract in January.

The sanctions bill was approved by Royce's committee in late 2017. It remains alive in the House of Representatives, awaiting a review by the House Financial Services Committee.

MEETINGS PROBED

The backstory of the legislative push is emerging amid continuing concerns about efforts by foreign governments or their proxies to influence American politics. While reports about possible Russian links to Trump's campaign and his presidential administration have been making headlines since 2016, questions are now arising about efforts during the Trump era to influence U.S. policy in the Middle East.

The U.S. has long been friendly with Saudi Arabia and the UAE as well as Qatar, which is home to a massive American air base that the U.S. has used in its fight against the Islamic State. But as political rifts in the Gulf have widened, the Saudis and Emiratis have sought to undercut American ties with Qatar.

Qatar and UAE have also exchanged allegations of politically motivated hacks. Scores of Broidy's emails and documents have leaked to news organizations, drawing attention to his relationship with Nader. Broidy has alleged that the hack was done by Qatari agents and has reported the breach to the FBI.

"It's no surprise that Qatar would see me as an obstacle and come after me in the way it has," he said in a statement.

AP

This 1998 frame from video provided by C-SPAN shows George Nader, president and editor of Middle East Insight. Nader, an adviser to the United Arab Emirates who is now a witness in the U.S. special counsel investigation into foreign meddling in American politics, wired $2.5 million to Donald Trump's fundraiser, Elliott Broidy, through a company in Canada, according to two people who spoke on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the matter.

A spokesman for the Qatari embassy, Jassim Mansour Jabr Al Thani, denied the charges, calling them "diversionary tactics." Representatives of the UAE did not respond to requests for comment.

The timeline of the influx of cash wired by Nader, an adviser to Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed al-Nahyan, the de facto leader of the UAE, may provide grist for U.S. special counsel Robert Mueller's legal team as it probes the activities of Trump and his associates during the 2016 campaign and beyond. However, it is not clear that Mueller has expanded his investigation in that direction.

Mueller's investigators are looking into two meetings close to Trump's inauguration attended by Nader and bin Zayed. The pair joined a meeting at New York's Trump Tower in December 2016 that included presidential son-in-law Jared Kushner and Steve Bannon, who was Trump's chief strategist at the time. A month later, Nader and bin Zayed were a world away on the Seychelles island chain in the Indian Ocean, meeting with Erik Prince, the founder of the security company Blackwater, and the Kremlin-connected head of a large Russian sovereign wealth fund, Kirill Dmitriev.

Nader, a Lebanese-American businessman, agreed to cooperate with Mueller's team after investigators stopped him at Dulles International Airport, according to a person familiar with his case.

That person and others who spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity said they could not be identified because of the sensitivity of the issues surrounding the Mueller investigation.

A lawyer for Nader declined to comment for this story.

POLICY PUSH

Broidy and Nader first met at Trump's presidential inauguration on Jan. 20, 2017, according to a person with knowledge of the matter.

Both men have checkered legal histories. Nader was convicted in a Czech Republic court in 2003 of multiple counts of sexually abusing minors. Broidy, a businessmen and prolific Republican fundraiser, was sidelined for a few years after he pleaded guilty to bribery in a case stemming from an investment scheme involving New York state's employee pension fund.

Broidy later re-emerged as a player in GOP politics. During the 2016 Republican presidential primary, he raised money for U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham, Sen. Marco Rubio and Sen. Ted Cruz. After Cruz bowed out of the race, Broidy signed on to help Trump during the 2016 election and beyond, co-hosting fundraisers across the country.

The meeting between Broidy and Nader at the dawn of Trump's presidency soon led the two to work together in an effort to shift U.S. policies on the Middle East.

On April 2, 2017, Nader asked Broidy to invoice his Dubai-based company for $2.5 million, according to someone familiar with the transaction who spoke on condition of anonymity.

On the same day, Broidy attached an invoice for that amount from Xiemen Investments Limited, a Canadian company directed by a friend. The money was forwarded to his own account in Los Angeles from the Canadian account, the person said. It was marked for consulting, marketing and advisory services, but was actually intended to fund Broidy's Washington advocacy regarding Qatar, two people familiar with the transaction said. The financial transaction and the White House meetings were first reported by The New York Times.

It was on May 23, 2017, when Royce, a 13-term Congressman, appeared at a conference on Qatar's ties to the Muslim Brotherhood and announced that he was introducing the sanctions bill that would name Qatar a state sponsor of terrorism.

The Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, a think tank that hosted the conference, said Broidy had approached it about organizing the event. Broidy bankrolled that conference and contributed to the financing of a second conference hosted on a similar theme in October by another think tank, the Hudson Institute.

Both organizations said Broidy said that no money from foreign governments was involved. FDD says it does not accept money from foreign governments and Hudson only accepts money from Democratic countries allied with the U.S.

"As is our funding policy, we asked if his funding was connected to any foreign governments or if he had business contracts in the Gulf. He assured us that he did not," FDD said in a statement.

Broidy donated millions of his own money to efforts to fight Qatar, in addition to the $2.5 million from Nader, according to someone close to him, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to discuss Broidy's private finances.

Broidy's behind-the-scenes efforts unfolded as animosity was growing between the UAE and Qatar. These tensions came to a head when the UAE and Saudi Arabia launched an embargo with travel and trade restrictions against Qatar less than two weeks after Royce introduced the sanctions legislation in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Weeks later, Trump himself waded into the fracas, accusing Qatar of funding extremism in tweets on June 6.

Royce and a staff member met with Broidy at Washington's Capitol Hill Club to discuss the bill, according to someone who was at the meeting. An associate, who Broidy paid for some of the work, also had frequent contact with congressional staff.

STRONG LANGUAGE

Broidy's effort to cultivate allies in Congress extended beyond Royce.

Broidy has personally given hundreds of thousands of dollars to Republicans over the past decade or more. But he gave nothing during the 2012 and 2014 election cycles and just $13,500 during the 2016 cycle. Things changed after Trump's election as Broidy ramped up his advocacy on Middle East policy. Broidy has given nearly $600,000 to GOP candidates and causes since the beginning of last year when he began his advocacy push- more than in the previous 14 years combined.

Campaign finance records going back two decades show Broidy had not given any money to Royce—until he gave the lawmaker a pair of $2,700 donations on July 31, 2017.

By then, the sanctions bill was on a fast track.

The original draft considered by the Foreign Affairs Committee contained language singling out Qatar as a supporter of Hamas, a Palestinian organization that has been designated as a terrorist group by the U.S. State Department.

"Hamas has received significant financial and military support from Qatar," the draft bill states.

Soon Qatar was lobbying hard to have that language excised. Nikki Haley, U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, declared in a statement to the committee that Qatar does not fund Hamas.

According to two people familiar with the committee deliberations, both Republican and Democratic staff members reached a consensus that because of the tensions in the Gulf, the language would look like the lawmakers were taking sides. They agreed to take it out of the bill.

Qatari officials and lobbyists thought the matter had been settled, according to one lobbyist and a committee staffer. But just before the bill was to be put up for debate ahead of the committee's vote, Royce ordered the language on Qatar not only reinstated, but strengthened, they say. The bill was approved by the committee in November with the stronger language on Qatar intact.

A Royce aide, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to comment, denied that Royce had ever considered removing the Qatar language.

In January, Royce announced that he would not seek re-election, saying that he wanted to focus on his committee in the last year of his chairmanship rather than a political campaign.

In the same month, Broidy's company signed the hefty contract with the UAE government for gathering intelligence, according to someone familiar with the work.

Good Housekeeping

Sweet Tea Mountain Gordlinia perfect for your Arbor Day celebration

TNS

The Sweet Tea Mountain gordlinia foliage colors up in the fall with hues of burgundy to orange.

TNS

Sweet Tea Mounain gordlinia is a cross between the Franklinia alatamaha and the Gordonia lasianthus.

By NORMAN WINTER
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

Two years ago, I wrote about a small tree called Sweet Tea Mountain Gordlinia that was catching the eye of the industry. After watching it two more growing seasons, I am even more mesmerized by its elegant form and structure, its long period of bloom that culminates in stunning fall and winter color.

All of my experience in growing it was as Director of the Coastal Georgia Botanical Gardens in Savannah Georgia. There this tree won the hearts of both employees and visitors. Now that I am in the hills (mountains to me) of West Georgia I am putting not one but three Sweet Tea Mountain Gordlinias on my landscape wish list. I can already picture the 5-inch wide white flowers glistening on the hillside overlooking Little Palmetto Creek.

Almost everything about this tree is amazing, its attributes, its history and then the science in its creation. The credit for this beautiful and rare hybrid goes to North Carolina State University Mountain Crops Improvement Lab who did an incredible cross in 2002.

Botanically speaking it is xGordlinia grandiflora "Sweet Tea'. That would be confusing to most gardeners. But what this means is this was a rare intergeneric cross by North Carolina State between two tea or camellia relatives, Franklinia alatamaha and Gordonia lasianthus.

I remember at Texas A & M I was taught in two separate classes, Nut Culture, and then in Plant Propagation that you could cross between species but it was next to impossible to cross two different genera. So, when the NC State Mountain Crops Improvement Lab made this cross, the impossible was conceived.

Then consider this, at the time there were no other Franklinias and no other Gordonias. These were classified as monotypic, one type or representative within the genus. Now perhaps you are saying to yourself that indeed is pretty rare, and you would be right. When it comes to the Franklinia however it goes one step further on the rarity scale in that the plants are extinct in the wild.

John and his son William Bartram, famous explorers and early American naturalists discovered the Franklinia atlatamaha in 1765 growing wild along the Altamaha River in Georgia. William carefully documented it through his writing and paintings. He collected seeds on return trips, but by 1790 the native had totally disappeared.

Today all growing Franklinias, aka Franklin trees, are from the same genetics of the seeds he collected on his journey while the U.S. was still the colonies. Oh yes, they are named after non-other than Ben Franklin a good friend of the Bartrams.

The Gordonia, called loblolly bay, on the other hand, is still thriving in the Southeast. We had one about 30-feet tall at the gardens in Savannah that bloomed with 2- to 3-inch white fragrant camellia-like flowers, in comparison Sweet Tea's flowers are enormous reaching 5-inches with brilliant gold stamens.

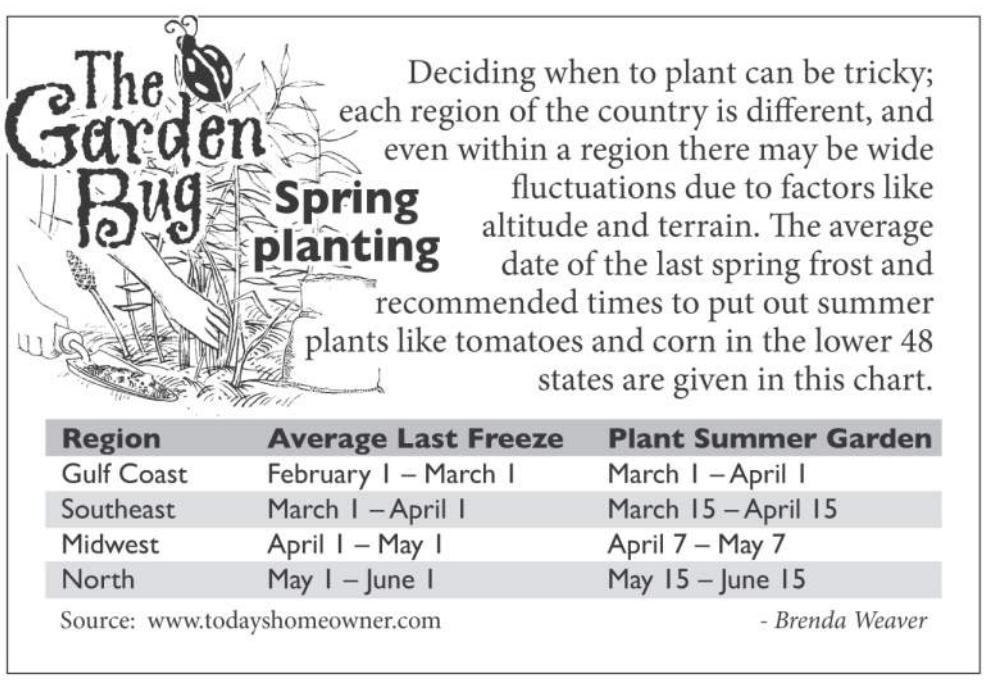
Sweet Tea Mountain gordlinia is cold hardy from zones 7 through 10 and is expected to reach around 20-30 feet a maturity with a spread of 10 to 15-feet. In other words, this is just the right size for today's smaller urban landscape. It is semi-evergreen, performing best in full sun with a little afternoon shade, the soil should be moist, fertile and well drained. Amazingly the tree colors up in shades of burgundy and orange during the fall and winter.

Sweet Tea Mountain Gordlinia is rare in beauty, science, and history. You'll find it as part of the Southern Living Plant Collection. It would be perfect for your families Arbor Day Celebration April 27.

Norman Winter, horticulturist, garden speaker and author of, "Tough-as-Nails Flowers for the South" and "Captivating Combinations: Color and Style in the Garden." Follow him on Facebook @NormanWinterTheGardenGuy.

TNS

Sweet Tea Mountain gordlinia produces 5-inch flowers from July through September.


The Garden Bug
Spring planting
Deciding when to plant can be tricky; each region of the country is different, and even within a region there may be wide fluctuations due to factors like altitude and terrain. The average date of the last spring frost and recommended times to put out summer plants like tomatoes and corn in the lower 48 states are given in this chart.
Region | Average Last Freeze | Plant Summer Garden
Gulf Coast | February 1 – March 1 | March 1 – April 1
Southeast | March 1 – April 1 | March 15 – April 15
Midwest | April 1 – May 1 | April 7 – May 7
North | May 1 – June 1 | May 15 – June 15
Source: www.todayshomeowner.com
- Brenda Weaver

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Life & Style

‘Ready Player One’ takes Spielberg back and to the future

By LINDSEY BAHR,
AP FILM WRITER

LOS ANGELES (AP)—In Ernest Cline’s novel “Ready Player One,” the main character drives a DeLorean because of “Back to the Future,” and uses a grail diary because of “Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade.” The films of Steven Spielberg loom large in the story littered with pop culture references. That the legendary filmmaker then ended up being the one to take Cline’s futuristic-nostalgic vision to the big screen is a small Spielbergian miracle.

“I hadn’t read anything that had triggered my own imagination so vividly where I couldn’t really shut it off,” said Spielberg, who, with “Ready Player One,” out Thursday, returns to the wide-eyed grand-scale blockbuster filmmaking that he made his name with.

The sci-fi spectacle with a reported $175 million production budget presents a near-future vision of a dystopian society that has all but abandoned the real world for an escapist virtual reality existence. In 2045, most people, including the teenage hero Wade (Tye Sheridan), spend their lives as avatars (Wade’s is a cooler version of himself named “Parzival”) in the virtual world of the OASIS—a VR game created by an eccentric genius, James Halliday (Mark Rylance), who has promised his wealth to whomever wins and finds the “Easter egg.”

It’s because of Halliday, who, like its author, came of age in the 1980s, that the OASIS is chalk full of 80s nostalgia from Atari to Buckaroo Banzai. It’s also why Cline assumed that “Ready Player One” would be impossible to adapt. How would anyone be able to secure all the rights?

That it ended up being Spielberg doing the asking helped a little, but producer Kristie Macosko Krieger is the one he credits for getting everything from Chucky to the Iron Giant in the film. She spent three years working with Warner Bros. to obtain all the necessary clearances from various studios. Some they didn’t use, like the main “Star Wars” icons (although you may spot an X-Wing or R2-D2 in a few frames), and some Spielberg just nixed himself, like the mothership from “Close Encounters of the Third Kind.” He didn’t want too many of his old movies in his new movie.

“There comes a point when I would have just had to defer to someone else who likes my movies and not make a movie about my movies,” Spielberg said.

It meant co-screenwriter Zak Penn would have to lose a few of his Spielberg-inspired jokes and ideas that he’d written into the script before Spielberg signed on to direct, but he didn’t mind.

“It would have taken you out of the narrative. He’s too iconic a director,” Penn said. “You’d be sitting there thinking, ‘Oh, this is from a Spielberg film.’”

But everything was on the table, from the song Cline walked down the aisle to (the Hall & Oats song “You Make My Dreams,” which plays during the credits) to a blink-and-you’ll-miss-it nod to “Last Action Hero,” Penn’s first movie which he had wanted Spielberg to direct. Penn, for his part, had said “no” to a proposed reference and was surprised when he saw one in the final cut. Cline had gone behind his back to persuade the folks at ILM to do it.

Most of the references amount to set-dressing, packing every frame in the OASIS with eggs that would take even the most eagle-eyed viewer multiple viewings to catch.

“My philosophy from the very beginning was, the story is out the front windshield and the pop culture references are out the side mirror,” Spielberg said. “And it’s your choice what you would like to look at.”

The production used cutting-edge technology to simulate the OASIS for the cast and crew with VR headsets that would give everyone a 360-degree view of what the virtual world looked like. And the film itself is a mash-up of past and present technologies, including motion capture, computer animation and even film stock, which Spielberg used to shoot the live-action sequences.

AP

This cover image released by Warner Bros. Pictures shows director Steven Spielberg, left, and Tye Sheridan on the set of “Ready Player One.”

Experts: Prince toxicology report shows very high drug level

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—A toxicology report from Prince’s autopsy, obtained Monday by The Associated Press, shows he had what multiple experts called an “exceedingly high” concentration of fentanyl in his body when he died.

Prince was 57 when he was found alone and unresponsive in an elevator at his Paisley Park estate on April 21, 2016. Public data released six weeks after his death showed he died of an accidental overdose of fentanyl, a synthetic opioid 50 times more powerful than heroin.

A confidential toxicology report obtained by the AP provides some insight into just how much fentanyl was in his system. Experts who are not connected to the Prince investigation said the numbers leave no doubt that fentanyl killed him.

“The amount in his blood is exceedingly high, even for somebody who is a chronic pain patient on fentanyl patches,” said Dr. Lewis Nelson, chairman of emergency medicine at Rutgers New Jersey Medical School. He called the fentanyl concentrations “a pretty clear smoking gun.”

The report says the concentration of fentanyl in Prince’s blood was 67.8 micrograms per liter. The report explains that fatalities have been documented in people with blood levels ranging from three to 58 micrograms per liter.

The report also says the level of fentanyl in Prince’s liver was 450 micrograms per kilogram, and notes that liver concentrations greater than 69 micrograms per kilogram “seem to represent overdose or fatal toxicity cases.”

There was also what experts called a potentially lethal amount of fentanyl in Prince’s stomach. Dr. Charles McKay, president of the American College of Medical Toxicology, said generally speaking, the findings suggest Prince took the drug orally, while fentanyl in the blood and liver suggest it had some time to circulate before he died.

Experts say there is no “lethal level” at which fentanyl can kill. A person who takes prescription opioids for a long time builds up a tolerance, and a dose that could kill one person might help another.

Search warrants released about a year after Prince’s death showed authorities found numerous pills in various containers around his home. A lab report obtained by the AP shows many of the pills tested positive for fentanyl and other drugs. Information that has been released publicly indicates the source of those drugs hasn’t been determined.

Last week, the lead prosecutor in the county where Prince died said in a statement that he was reviewing law enforcement reports and would make a decision on whether to charge anyone “in the near future.”

Cynthia Nixon blasts Cuomo as ‘bully,’ ‘wannabe Republican’

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP)—Actress Cynthia Nixon blasted Gov. Andrew Cuomo as a “bully” and a “wannabe Republican” Monday during her first visit to Albany since announcing her bid for New York governor.

The “Sex and the City” star and public education advocate criticized the two-term governor for not doing enough to ensure equal opportunities for poor and minority students. She also faulted Cuomo’s effort to combat government corruption and said that while he touts himself as a progressive, he’s governed as a member of what she called Albany’s “old boys’ club.”

“We’ve all seen it: Andrew the bully. He bullies other elected officials. He bullies anyone who criticizes him,” Nixon said. “It reminds me of the behavior we see from Donald Trump every day. My experience has taught me that there is only one way to deal with a bully. You have to stand up to him.”

Nixon’s from-the-left challenge to Cuomo in September’s Democratic primary has upended what many had predicted to be an easy re-election for Cuomo, the son of the late Gov. Mario Cuomo. An ally of Cuomo’s nemesis, Democratic New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio, Nixon’s bid is highlighting Cuomo’s often uneasy relationship with liberals in his own party.

A spokesman for Cuomo’s re-election campaign did not immediately respond to messages seeking a response to Nixon’s comments. The campaign has previously pointed to Cuomo’s achievements including legalizing gay marriage, tightening gun restrictions, raising the minimum wage, expanding public education funding and banning fracking.

Cuomo’s allies came to his defense, with labor leader Hector Figueroa saying the election will come down to who can best serve New Yorkers, “not who can seize the most headlines by waging personal attacks against another candidate.”

Porn star's claim she was threatened disputed by White House

WASHINGTON (AP)—The White House is disputing adult film star Stormy Daniels' claim that she was threatened to keep quiet over her alleged affair with Donald Trump and said the president continues to deny the relationship.

Daniels' detailed her allegations in a widely watched interview with "60 Minutes" that sparked new legal wrangling between attorneys for the porn star and the president's team. A lawyer for Michael Cohen, Trump's personal attorney, demanded that Daniels publicly apologize to his client for suggesting he was involved in her intimidation. Daniels responded by filing a revised federal lawsuit accusing Cohen of defamation.

Trump, who frequently takes on his foes in person and on social media, remained uncharacteristically quiet about the matter Monday. He sent a cryptic tweet saying "fake news" has "never been more voluminous or more inaccurate" but it was unclear what exactly he was referring to.

Instead, he left the denials to his White House staff. Spokesman Raj Shah declined to say whether the president had watched Daniels' interview, but said Trump did not believe any of the claims she made.

"The president strongly, clearly and has consistently denied these underlying claims, and the only person who's been inconsistent is the one making the claims," Shah said.

But Daniels was on Trump's mind this weekend in Palm Beach, Florida, where he had dinner Saturday night with Cohen at his Mar-a-Lago estate.

Trump, according to one person who spent time with him, told guests that Daniels now owes him $21 million for breaking her silence, and that every time she talks, she owes him a million more. Trump appeared in good spirits, laughing off the fact that Daniels will be bringing her "Making America Horny Again" strip show to a nearby venue next month, said the person, who spoke on condition of anonymity because the person was not authorized to disclose private conversations.

AP

This image released by CBS News shows Stormy Daniels, left, during an interview with Anderson Cooper which aired on Sunday, March 25, 2018, on "60 Minutes."

Mar-a-Lago member Chris Ruddy, the CEO of Newsmax, told ABC Sunday that Trump told him "much of the Stormy Daniels stuff" is a "political hoax."

Trump returned to Washington Sunday night, though first lady Melania Trump stayed behind in Florida. A spokeswoman for Mrs. Trump said she is "focused on being a mom and is quite enjoying spring break at Mar-a-Lago while working on future projects."

In her interview, Daniels said she'd slept with Trump once, shortly after Mrs. Trump gave birth to the president's youngest son. She also said that a man approached her in a Las Vegas parking lot in 2011, when she was with her infant daughter, and threatened her with physical harm if she went public with her story.

In a letter late Sunday night, an attorney for Cohen demanded that Daniels publicly apologize to his client.

"In truth, Mr. Cohen had absolutely nothing whatsoever to do with any such person or incident, and does not even believe that any such person exists, or that such incident ever occurred," wrote Brent H. Blakely. He said Daniels and her lawyer, Michael Avenatti, should "cease and desist from making any further false and defamatory statements about my client."

Daniels, in the revised lawsuit she filed Monday, alleges Cohen made a false statement that damaged her reputation when he released a statement in February that intimated she was lying.

In a round of television interviews Monday morning, Avenatti said he was holding back certain details of the alleged affair, including the contents of a CD or DVD he tweeted a picture of last week, for strategic reasons. "It would make no sense for us to play our hand as to this issue and we're not going to do it right now," he said on NBC's "Today" show.

Daniels received a $130,000 payment days before the 2016 presidential election for her silence and has sought to invalidate a nondisclosure agreement she signed. Cohen has said he paid the $130,000 out of his own pocket while asserting Trump never had sex with the porn actress.

Previously, Cohen has said neither the Trump Organization nor the Trump campaign was a party to the transaction with Daniels and he was not reimbursed for the payment.

During Monday's briefing, Shah said neither the White House nor Trump had violated campaign finance laws that restrict political contributions.

"The White House didn't engage in any wrongdoing," Shah said of Trump's behavior, adding that there was "nothing to corroborate" Daniels' intimidation claims.

'60 Minutes,' Stormy Daniels get big ratings, some pushback

LOS ANGELES (AP)—An interview with Stormy Daniels delivered for "60 Minutes," giving the long-running CBS news magazine its highest ratings in a decade. But the story wasn't a slam dunk, either in the reaction it produced or getting on the air in the first place.

An estimated 22 million viewers tuned in Sunday to see the adult film star tell "60 Minutes" correspondent Anderson Cooper about her alleged 2006 sexual encounter with Donald Trump and the aftermath, which she said included efforts to silence her.

Daniels also said she swatted Trump's behind with a magazine bearing his photo to take his boasting down a peg.

"I think people thought there was going to be a smoking gun here. Did we miss something?" Whoopi Goldberg asked Daniels' attorney, Michael Avenatti, Monday on ABC's "The View."

Avenatti responded that Daniels' account of being threatened to keep quiet about the affair represents a "big, big accusation" and a "critical" fact. In other TV interviews, Avenatti said he was holding back certain details of the alleged affair, including the contents of a CD or DVD he tweeted a picture of last week, for strategic reasons.

Jeff Fager, executive producer of "60 Minutes," said the report included meaningful aspects of Daniels' story, including what the $130,000 payment to her by Trump attorney Michael Cohen might mean in the context of federal campaign rules.

Daniels received the money days before the 2016 presidential election and is seeking to invalidate a nondisclosure agreement she signed. Cohen has said he made the payment out of his pocket while asserting Trump never had sex with the porn actress, whose legal name is Stephanie Clifford.

"I do think people probably had an expectation there would be more details of the affair, for example, which is not something we do at '60 Minutes,' not fitting for us," Fager told The Associated Press. "We told her story in one part, and we examined why it matters in another."

"If people were expecting more sensationalism, they probably were a little disappointed. ... but 22 million people stayed with us, so I don't think they were," he said.

That's double the season-to-date average viewership of about 11 million for the program, now in its 50th year.

The White House on Monday said President Trump has consistently denied the allegations leveled by Daniels, and Trump does not believe her claim that she was threatened to stay quiet over their alleged affair. White House spokesman Raj Shah declined to say whether the president had watched the broadcast. During Monday's briefing, Shah said neither the White House nor Trump had violated campaign finance laws that restrict political contributions.

New wife surprised to learn of husband's family secret

DEAR ABBY: My husband and I have been married for a few months and are expecting our first child. His father passed away about a year ago. His parents had been married 33 years when he died.

A few weeks ago, we told my mother-in-law we were expecting our first child. After a joyous moment and some conversation later about children, she brought up my husband's half-brother, someone I didn't know existed! My husband then said, "I thought we weren't supposed to talk about him." She told him my father-in-law had reached out to the half-brother before his death to make amends (she'd had no knowledge they were in contact), but while she was cleaning out his wallet she found a picture of him.

Abby, I'm confused now about how to discuss this with my husband because I would love to know more details about his half-brother. I don't know how old he is, or what happened (i.e., infidelity). Evidently, he lives close to us. We might have met before. My husband nor anyone in his family mentioned this person, ever! Should I just leave it alone, or should I probe some more to see if I can get more information?

PERPLEXED IN INDIANA

DEAR PERPLEXED: It appears the existence of this half-sibling is the skeleton in your husband's family closet. If I were you, I'd be careful about rattling it. Ask your husband if he's willing to share what he knows. If he is interested in pursuing more information, offer to help him. But unless he is, I do not advise starting to dig.

P.S. Because the father reached out to make amends, the half-brother may try to contact his siblings. But don't count on it.

DEAR ABBY: I have been married for four months. My husband and I love each other very much. Although he has asked me multiple times for sex, we have only made love twice.

My problem is, sex doesn't interest me. In fact, the thought of it terrifies me. I hate saying no because I know it hurts him, but I'm always scared that I won't enjoy it. Or that if I do say yes, I'll feel like it's a chore just to make him happy. I know that's the wrong mindset to have going into it.

I have apologized almost every time I turn him down. He always says I don't need to be sorry and we'll only do it when I'm comfortable, but I'm scared I might not ever be comfortable with it. Plus I have doubts that I've ever had an orgasm. How should I approach this?

SCARED NEWLYWED

DEAR SCARED: If you had experienced an orgasm, I assure you that you would not have forgotten the experience. You need to have at least two honest conversations—the first with your husband, the second with your gynecologist. Your problem may be physical, emotional or a combination of the two.

A licensed psychologist can help you figure out the reason for your feelings and resolve them, or refer you and your husband to a sex therapist. The only thing you should NOT do is wait any longer to deal with this.

For an excellent guide to becoming a better conversationalist and a more sociable person, order "How to Be Popular." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Popularity Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY

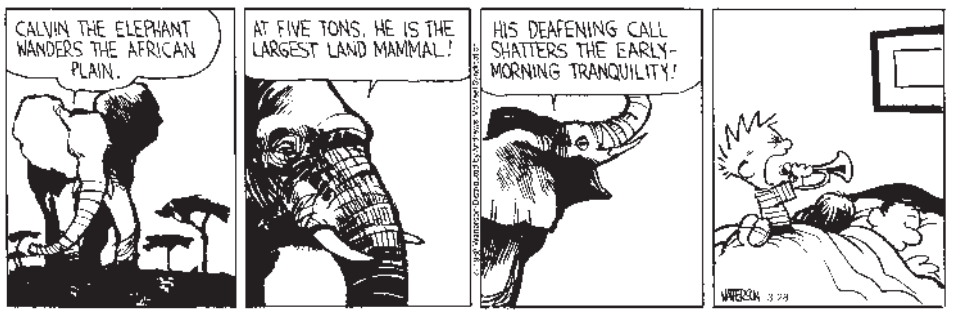
By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


CALVIN THE ELEPHANT WANDERS THE AFRICAN PLAIN.
AT FIVE TONS, HE IS THE LARGEST LAND MAMMAL!
HIS DEAFENING CALL SHATTERS THE EARLY-MORNING TRANQUILITY!

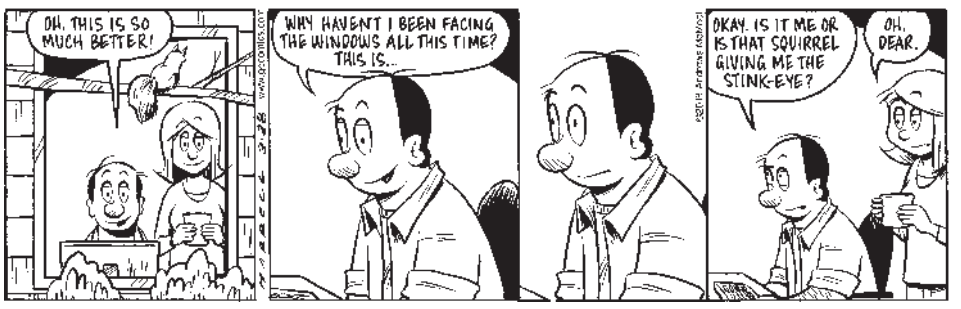
Garfield®

By Jim Davis

"DEAR ASK A DOG, WHAT'S WITH YOU DOGS ROOTING THROUGH THE GARBAGE ALL THE TIME?"
BARK! BARK! BARK! BARK! BARK! BARK!
YOUR DENIAL WOULD BE MORE BELIEVABLE IF YOU DIDN'T HAVE A BANANA PEEL ON YOUR HEAD
JIM DAVIS 3-28

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


OH, THIS IS SO MUCH BETTER!
WHY HAVEN'T I BEEN FACING THE WINDOWS ALL THIS TIME? THIS IS...
OKAY. IS IT ME OR IS THAT SQUIRREL GIVING ME THE STINK-EYE?
OH, DEAR.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 "Wham!"
4 Coach Parseghian
7 Antitoxins
8 Justice Kagan
10 Martini's wine partner
11 Moocher
13 Star of TV's "Suddenly Susan"
16 "— a Wonderful Life"
17 Perfect
18 In the past
19 Stretches (out)
20 Wee songbird
21 Commence
23 Chose
25 Sax range
26 Eventful periods
27 Lobbying org.
28 Colorado ski resort
30 Biol. or chem
33 1980 romantic adventure film starring 13-Across
36 American flag feature
37 Long for
38 Walking sticks
39 Roof overhang
40 German article
41 Nay undoer

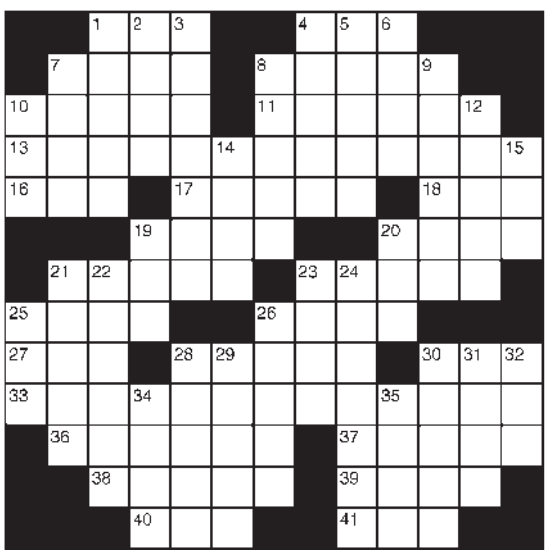
DOWN

1 Mexican money
2 Roughly
3 Surfing mecca on Oahu
4 Greek leader?
5 Lubricate anew
6 Green Gables girl
7 Type
8 Road curves
9 Harshly bright
10 Hitter's stat
12 Moved sideways
14 Paradise
15 Junior
19 Swelled head
20 Oz., lb., et al.
21 Doldrums
22 Long list's shortener (Abbr.)
23 Pitcher Hershiser
24 Cure-all
25 Suitable
26 Tools for duels
28 Skirt style
29 Terrific
30 Italian wine
31 Inlet
32 Chemical suffix
34 Thin nail
35 Battleship color

Solution time: 23 mins.

F	R	A	S		B	A	N		A	I	U	M	
F	U	M	P		A	B	F		A	R	C		
I	T	B	F		G	O	O	D		O	G	C	
C	H	I	C	A	G	O		E	A	S	E	D	
			K	A	Y		A	B	C				
L	E	A	S	H		O	N	T	H	E	G	O	
A	R	I			A	X	E			M	E	L	
V	E	R	T	I	G	O		W	O	O	E	D	
			U	K	F		S	F	Z				
I	N	A	N	F		F	M	B	A	R	G	O	
F	A	N	D	A	N	G	O		R	O	O	M	
S	C	A	R		A	G	T		K	O	N	A	
O	I	G	A		P	O	F		S	T	F	N	

Yesterday's answer 3-28



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Lady Gaga, 32; Julia Stiles, 37; Vince Vaughn, 48; Reba McEntire, 63.

Happy Birthday: Don't sit back when you should be moving forward. Take control of your current situation, and use your experience and insight to help you unravel any glitches that might hold you back. Plan to excel, not to coast along. Use what you've learned to your advantage, and you will bring about positive change for not only yourself, but also those you encounter. Your numbers are 7, 15, 21, 26, 37, 43, 49.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* A change of pace will do you good. If you are bored or fed up, look at your options and make some inquiries. Stop waiting for someone else to take over or put you in a compromising position. ✪✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Bring about change, but stay within your budget. You won't get ahead if you go into debt trying to do the impossible. Think, plan and execute your idea with precision, detail and the confidence that you played by the rules. ✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* You can make changes to your appearance, how you live or who you spend most of your time with as long as you don't neglect to watch your spending. Remain true to your word when dealing with sensitive issues. ✪✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Put more into your relationships with people at work and at home. Speak from the heart and avoid putting a negative slant on what others do or say. Acceptance coupled with positive reinforcement will encourage a better outcome. ✪✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Someone from your past will be a reminder of what it is you wanted to accomplish. Settle down and get into the hard work required to actually turn your plan into a reality. Know your limitations and set a strict budget. ✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Get involved in activities that will broaden your perspective. Strive for expansion that is within your means and for the right reason. Don't follow what someone else is doing. What works for him or her may not work for you. ✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Someone will play with your emotions if you are too generous. Take the time to find out what's really going on before you decide to take part in someone else's plan. Don't feel obliged to help others. Do your own thing. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Look for new ways to use your skills. Ask questions and sign up for seminars that will emphasize what's trending and what's economically feasible for you to pursue. Know your boundaries and look for a plan that suits your budget. ✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Stick to the truth. If you give someone the wrong impression, you will end up paying for your mistake. Concentrate on home, family and making positive changes that will help improve your relationships with the people you care about most. ✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* A joint venture may tempt you, but caution will be required. Someone's bravado and finesse are likely to draw you into something you will live to regret. Don't spend money you cannot afford to lose. Stick to what you do best. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* You may feel as if you need a change, but before you decide to jump in or out of your comfort zone, consider the consequences. If a relationship is suffering, discuss the problem and potential solutions before you take action. ✪✪✪

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): A change of plans will turn out to be to your advantage. A new look or image will put you in a good mood and encourage you to explore new possibilities. Reconnect via social media with someone from your past. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are energetic, unpredictable and strong-willed. You are assertive and ambitious.

(To submit astrological questions to the "Dear Eugenia" column, visit Eugenialast.com, or join Eugenia on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn.)

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

		9		3		4		
	3		7		4		5	
	4						2	
		1	5	2	7	6		
			8		3			
			6		1			
	6	5				3	9	
8								2
	1	2	9	8	5	7	6	

Difficulty Level ★★★ 3/28

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

5	2	6	4	3	8	1	9	7
9	1	3	7	2	6	8	5	4
7	4	8	9	1	5	3	6	2
3	9	2	8	7	1	5	4	6
6	5	1	3	4	9	7	2	8
4	8	7	5	6	2	9	1	3
1	7	9	6	8	4	2	3	5
8	6	5	2	9	3	4	7	1
2	3	4	1	5	7	6	8	9

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

THE KANSAS JAYHAWKS Solution: 8 letters

L	G	S	T	E	K	C	I	T	G	O	L	F	S	L
L	N	T	I	R	I	P	S	B	N	T	A	D	E	L
A	I	R	S	S	N	O	I	S	I	V	I	D	R	A
B	W	O	E	U	L	B	E	U	H	K	I	E	K	B
T	O	P	B	G	Y	C	R	A	C	S	K	C	R	T
E	R	S	R	A	N	C	R	M	R	W	O	U	A	F
K	E	E	J	O	E	E	A	I	A	R	G	A	P	O
S	V	G	T	R	G	E	Z	H	M	B	L	L	D	S
A	I	F	A	S	T	R	Y	N	Y	S	A	U	N	T
B	D	N	W	E	O	A	A	E	O	Y	O	M	U	N
R	O	I	N	U	J	R	M	M	E	H	O	N	L	E
E	M	O	R	E	V	I	R	R	S	I	A	I	G	D
L	S	M	A	E	T	S	A	C	D	O	P	E	O	U
A	S	A	S	N	A	K	L	A	T	K	W	A	H	T
Y	L	M	O	D	E	E	R	F	R	E	C	C	O	S

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Alumni, Basketball, Big Jay, Blue, Crimson, Dive, Divisions, Fast, Freedom, Golf, Hawk Talk, Hoglund Park, Jayhawker, Junior, Kansas, Kids, Marching, One Team, Player, Podcast, Programs, Radio, Recruit, Relay, River, Rock, Roster, Rowing, Rugby, Sheahon Zenger, Side, Soccer, Softball, Spirit, Sports, Students, Swim, Teams, Tennis, Tickets, Time

Yesterday's Answer: Matriarchal

Treasuries 13 through 29 can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com.

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ITB NO.: ITB18-JUDICIARY-02
SUBMISSION DATE: April 6, 2018 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"PURCHASE OF MICROSOFT OFFICE 2016"
FOR THE CNMI Judiciary, Judicial Administrative Office"

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THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/s/ ALEXANDRO C. CASTRO
JUDICIARY EXPENDITURE AUTHORITY

/s/JOHN T. VILLAGOMEZ
JUDICIARY PROCUREMENT OFFICER

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT
INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB18-OGM-069
SUBMISSION DATE: APRIL 16, 2018 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

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/S/ EPHIPHANIO E. CABRERA, JR.
ADMINISTRATOR, OFFICE OF GRANTS

/S/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
DIRECTOR, P&S

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
RFP NO.: RFP18-CCC-073

SUBMISSION/OPENING DATE: APRIL 17, 2018 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"CUBICLE WORKSTATIONS/PARTITIONS AND OFFICE FURNITURES/FIXTURES FOR THE COMMONWEALTH CASINO COMMISSION"

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QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS PROJECT CAN BE MADE TO **MR. EDWARD C. DELEON GUERRERO**, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, BY EMAIL AT **ceo.cnmicasino@gmail.com** or **commonwealthcasinocommission@gmail.com** NO LATER THAN **4:30 P.M., THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS, APRIL 02, 2018**. RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS SHALL BE SHARED WITH ALL PROSPECTIVE PROPOSERS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CCC

/S/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
DIRECTOR, P&S

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NFL weighing changes to catch rule

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP)— That's a catch.

Mention the names Calvin Johnson, Dez Bryant, Zach Miller and Jesse James , and what looked, sounded and felt like a catch wasn't one. If NFL owners pass a proposal from the powerful competition committee, those will be receptions in the future.

According to committee chairman Rich McKay and league officiating director Al Riveron, it's time.

"We want to take these great catches and make them into catches," Riveron said Monday at the NFL meetings, where the owners likely will vote Tuesday on the adjustments to the catch rule.

Such phrases as "slight movement of the ball" and "surviving the ground" will disappear, and fans, players and coaches will get the fulfilment of knowing what they were sure was a reception actually is.

The committee looked at dozens of plays dozens of times. They discovered that the previous attempts to clarify what is a catch only confused the issue. So much so that the language of the rules was getting in the way of making the proper call.

"Every time, we tried to add language to cure a situation," said McKay, president of the Atlanta Falcons "and that did not serve us well.

"We felt like the word slight was getting people caught up. It's really loss of control. If you lose control of the ball, then you haven't satisfied (the process). If you have movement of the ball but haven't lost control of it, then you still have it."

AP

In this Feb. 4, 2018, file photo, Philadelphia Eagles' Corey Clement catches a touchdown pass during the second half of the NFL Super Bowl 52 football game against the New England Patriots in Minneapolis. The play was reviewed and called a touchdown. The NFL's catch rule would get less complicated if team owners approve recommendations from the powerful competition committee.

Added Riveron: "If we see total loss of control, that's the way we're going to rule it. But we understand there are situations where the ball is going to move. We have to see loss of control."

McKay pointed to touchdown receptions by Alshon Jeffery and Corey Clement in the Super Bowl. In both cases, the ball moved a bit in the receiver's hands. In both cases, though, on-field officials, then Riveron handling the video review, determined there was possession throughout.

"Those are catches," he said, noting that under current language in the rules, "the ground trumped everything. It didn't make a lot of sense."

The committee examined plays back to the 1990s and early 2000s, including a pass to the Jets' Wayne Chrebet in which McKay said the film was "so grainy you could barely make it out." He mentioned Bert Emanuel's non-reception in the 1999 NFC title game when the tip of the ball touched the ground even though Emanuel had it in his clutches.

The major emphasis on re-examining the rule stems from Bryant's non-catch in a playoff game at Green Bay. Reconstructing that play through video, Riveron explained how the proposed change will seize logic—in other words, make what should have been a catch into a real catch.

"I think the Dez Bryant was the start of us realizing something needs to change," McKay said.

Each year, there have been similar examples that made everyone from the guys throwing the ball to the coaches on the sideline to the fans in the stands and on their mobile devices wondering what was going on. When James' apparent winning touchdown reception against New England was overturned even though the Steelers tight end made a football move to extend the ball over the goal line, it prompted Commissioner Roger Goodell to forcefully endorse seeking adjustments to the rule.

The competition committee heeded such instructions.

So, a receiver must: have control of the ball; get two feet down or another body part; make a football move: taking a third step or extending the ball or something similar.

Gone, Riveron emphatically said, is surviving the ground.

"That's out," he said. "No mas."

There will, however, be more emphasis on the on-field officiating calls. McKay reminded that game officials overwhelmingly get the calls correct at full speed.

"The rule is a lot cleaner, so the answer is yes," Riveron said, adding that game officials were consulted as the committee worked on the language of the proposal.

Watson envisions the shots, just not trophies

AUSTIN, Texas (AP)—Bubba Watson sees golf differently from anyone else.

His most famous shot is still that gap wedge he hit from a forest of pine trees to the right of the 10th fairway at Augusta National in a playoff, the one he hooked some 40 yards to an elevated green. "If I have a swing, I have shot," is the credo he shares with longtime caddie Ted Scott.

It's what he often refers to as "Bubba golf."

What he still has trouble seeing is the amount of trophies that are starting to pile up.

He won the Dell Technologies Match Play for his second victory in his last four starts, the first time he has ever won twice in a season before the Masters. It was his second World Golf Championship and his 11th victory on the PGA Tour.

"A guy named Bubba from Bagdad, Florida, never had a lesson," he said, a story he repeats often because part of him still can't believe all he's done. "All I had is dreams and creativity. I enjoy playing golf because that's what I'm doing as a kid. I'm a kid who happens to be 39 now, and somehow I keep getting trophies."

His victory at Austin Country Club was remarkable for a number of reasons.

He doesn't like this format. Watson reached the semifinals his first year of the Match Play, but he never got beyond the fourth round in his next six appearances. That might explain why he booked a vacation starting Sunday.

Even when he reached the final round, he never imagined he would be playing for the title. His semifinal match was against Justin Thomas, who could have reached No. 1 in the world with a win. Watson saw that match going differently.

"Justin Thomas making every putt and me losing, him looking at me and going, `I'm No. 1.' Truly, he's playing so good," Watson said.

Watson caught him on a day when Thomas couldn't buy a putt, and Watson made his share of them in a 3-and-2 victory that sent him into a championship match that wasn't much of a contest. He faced Kevin Kisner, who survived a 19-hole semifinal victory over Alex Noren. An hour later, Kisner couldn't hit a shot where he was aiming and lost six of the first seven holes. The only reason he didn't lose all seven was because Watson missed a 4-foot birdie putt.

What satisfies Watson the most is where he was headed last year. He was not in a good spot.

Watson still keeps to himself the health issues last year that caused his weight to drop to 160 pounds. He won't attribute his worst year on the PGA Tour to playing the different colors of a Volvik golf ball, which he no longer uses. And he doesn't get into details of the conversation he had with his wife and those closest around him, when he contemplated retirement.

Watson stays plenty busy with two children and business interests that range from a candy shop to a car dealership to a minor league baseball team.

"There's a lot of time I could be wasting—not wasting, but improving those businesses," Watson said. "Or I could be struggling to make cuts on the PGA Tour. So that was my option. Which one?"

It goes back to his vision, and the reason he was attracted to golf in the first place.

Red Sox top list of payroll projections

NEW YORK (AP)—The Yankees are on track to open the season this week with baseball's seventh-highest payroll, their lowest ranking since 1992, according to projections by The Associated Press.

The Boston Red Sox will top the major leagues at about $223 million, ending the Los Angeles Dodgers' four-year run as the top spender. San Francisco will be second at around $203 million, and the Chicago Cubs are set to be third at about $183 million.

The Dodgers and Washington Nationals will each be at approximately $180 million, and the Los Angeles Angels will be next at about $170 million. The Yankees will be around $167 million — their lowest payroll since 2003.

Angels outfielder Mike Trout is the highest-paid player for the first time at $34.08 million, which includes a $33.25 million salary and a prorated share of his signing bonus. Dodgers pitcher Clayton Kershaw dropped to second at $34 million after leading the list for three straight years.

Arizona pitcher Zack Greinke fell one spot to third at $31.95 million, followed by a trio at $30 million: Philadelphia pitcher Jake Arrieta, Boston pitcher David Price and Detroit first baseman Miguel Cabrera.

The average salary is on track to be around the same as last year's opening figure of $4.45 million, perhaps slightly higher.

Figures are based on rosters as of Monday afternoon, three days before opening-day rosters are set. They were obtained by the AP from management and player sources and include salaries and pro-rated shares of signing bonuses for players on the 25-man active roster and disabled lists. Termination pay for released players and buyouts for unexercised 2018 options are included, as are cash transactions in trades.

Celtics top Suns for fourth straight victory

PHOENIX (AP)— Jayson Tatum got the better of Josh Jackson in a showdown of two of the top four picks in last year's NBA draft.

Tatum scored 23 points, Marcus Morris had 20 points in three quarters before leaving with an injury and the Boston Celtics rolled over the Phoenix Suns 102-94 on Monday night.

Tatum surpassed 1,000 points for the season, and Boston won its fourth straight to move to three games behind the Toronto Raptors for first place in the Eastern Conference.

The game featured two young talents who are getting major minutes. Tatum was the third pick in last year's draft, and Jackson, the fourth pick, led the Suns with 23 points. Jackson has scored 15 or more points in seven straight games, but the Suns lost their 12th straight and have dropped 27 of 29.

"I've known Josh for a long time," Tatum said. "It's always fun to compete. When you get more opportunities and you've got somebody that can play, they're going to show what they can do."

Morris, a former Sun, reinjured a sprained right ankle that forced him out of the Celtics' game Sunday at Sacramento. He didn't play in the fourth quarter.

Al Horford added 19 points, nine rebounds and seven assists for the Celtics.

"In my eyes, he's the rookie of the year," Horford said of Tatum.

Tyler Ulis added a season-high 19 points for Phoenix.

The Celtics were without star guard Kyrie Irving, who had knee surgery Saturday. The Suns were without their star guard, Devin Booker, who missed his fifth straight game with a hand injury.

Tatum scored nine of the Celtics' first 11 points, while Jackson had all of the first 11 for the Suns. The Celtics made 5 of 7 3-pointers in the first quarter and led 31-15 when it ended.

Boston led 39-19 during the second quarter, but the Suns chipped away and cut the lead to 48-45 on Marquese Chriss' rebound basket with 5.6 seconds to go until halftime.

"As soon as we went to the bench I thought our guys did a real good job for us," Suns coach Jay Triano said. "Changed our energy in the game. They got up and they pressured, followed the game plan."

Boston made 7 of 21 second-quarter shots while Phoenix went from 24 percent in the first quarter to a field-goal percentage of 55 in the second. Ulis spurred the comeback with seven points, five assists and four rebounds in the quarter.

"Just playing free and playing with confidence," Ulis said.

The Suns tied it at 56, but Morris' three free throws after the third quarter buzzer gave the Celtics a 77-65 lead. He aggravated his ankle injury on the foul.

"It's just sore," Morris said after X-rays came back negative. "Be out a couple of days but nothing long-term."

The Celtics were never seriously threatened in the fourth.

AP

Boston Celtics guard Jaylen Brown (7) loses the ball as he tries to go up for a shot between Phoenix Suns forward Dragan Bender, right, and forward Marquese Chriss, left, during the first half of an NBA basketball game Monday, March 26, 2018, in Phoenix.

Sixers 123, Nuggets 104

In Philadelphia, Markelle Fultz heard 20,000 fans chanting "Fultz! Fultz! Fultz!" and for a fleeting moment he thought they were serenading Philly's most popular athlete.

"I thought they were saying `Nick Foles," Fultz said of the Super Bowl MVP for the champion Philadelphia Eagles.

"Then I realized it, and it was pretty dope. These fans are great, and I love them."

The Sixers and their fans wanted the No. 1 pick to play and—after five often-confusing months—they got him.

Fultz scored 10 points and had eight assists in his first game since October, helping the Philadelphia 76ers beat the Denver Nuggets.

The first selection of the 2017 draft shot an airball, had three shots blocked and artfully attacked the lane, flashing glimpses of what has made him both a mystery project and prominent prospect.

With Philadelphia having clinched a playoff berth for the first time since 2012, Fultz decided the time was right to return from the injured shoulder and busted confidence that had cost him all but four games of his rookie season.

Fultz was on a media blackout in his absence and said nothing in his public return to clarify his situation.

He basically ignored the first two questions about his shoulder, and instead thanked teammates and coaches for their support during rehab.

Why was today the day to play?

"Just woke up and it was that day," he said.

His next two answers were as empty as his stat line since October.

Grizzlies 101, Timberwolves 93

In Minneapolis, Wayne Selden scored 23 points, Marc Gasol had 20 points, 10 rebounds and six assists, and the Grizzlies snapped a 17-game road losing streak

Selden and Gasol each hit four 3-pointers as Memphis went 15 of 31 from beyond the arc while dealing a blow to Minnesota's playoff hopes.

The Timberwolves (42-33) dropped to eighth in the Western Conference standings, a half-game back of idle Utah.

Jeff Teague had 25 points and seven assists for Minnesota, which lost its second straight game and dropped to 6-7 since All-Star Jimmy Butler was lost to a knee injury.

Hornets 137, Knicks 128, OT

In Charlotte, Kemba Walker had 11 points of his 31 points and three assists in overtime, and Charlotte earned its fourth straight victory.

Walker hit a late 3-pointer to help send the game into overtime and then took over.

Walker was 4 for 4 in the extra period with three 3-pointers to outduel New York's Trey Burke, who finished with a career-high 42 points on 19-of-31 shooting and 12 assists.

Dwight Howard had 23 points and 13 rebounds for the Hornets.

Michael Beasley added 27 points for the Knicks, who fell to 9-30 on the road.

Pistons 112, Lakers 106

In Detroit, Reggie Jackson scored 20 points and Reggie Bullock had 16, leading the Pistons to the victory.

Detroit (34-40) won for the fourth time in five games, but trails idle Miami by five games for the final Eastern Conference playoff spot.

With Blake Griffin reduced to 24 minutes due to foul trouble, reserve Anthony Tolliver added 15 points as the Pistons put six players in double figures.

Julius Randle had 22 points and 11 rebounds for Los Angeles, and Lonzo Ball finished with 15 points, 11 assists and eight rebounds. Kyle Kuzma had 20 points and 11 boards.

Wall practices again but not sure when he'll play

WASHINGTON (AP)— Washington Wizards point guard John Wall is not planning to change his style whatsoever when he returns from his latest knee surgery -- whenever that might be.

"I'm just going to be John Wall," he said Monday after the second full-contact practice of his comeback from an operation on Jan. 31. "That's all I know how to do."

The All-Star declared himself "feeling great" but said he is not sure when he will be able to play in a game for the Wizards, who desperately need help at the moment. Washington has lost three consecutive games heading into Tuesday night against the visiting San Antonio Spurs; coach Scott Brooks said Wall will not play in that one.

"It's getting close. He's had two really, really good days. His energy level is high. He's anxious. You can tell. He wants to get out there," Brooks said. "We still want to be patient."

Washington has dropped to sixth in the Eastern Conference at 40-33 and will only have eight games remaining after facing the Spurs.

The Wizards are 14-11 without Wall during his current absence—he last played on Jan. 25—and 19-17 overall this season without him.

"It's been good. It's been bad. We've played well, at times. Sometimes, we haven't played well. Like when everybody was saying that they (were) playing better without me, that was great. The good thing is, I'm glad we did we did win those games when we did, because if we didn't, right now, we would be in a situation where we might not be in the playoffs," Wall said. "I feel like everybody should have given those guys credit for playing well."

Wall's session with reporters on Monday was his first in Washington since having surgery on his left knee. He said he lost about 10 or 15 pounds during his rehab, without intending to.

The No. 1 overall pick in the 2010 NBA draft out of Kentucky had surgery on both of his knees before last season.

This time, Brooks said, Wall has been able to do pretty much everything as usual in his pair of full-fledged practices, including dunk.

"He's getting his rhythm back. He can get to gaps and seams and angles not a lot of guys can get to. There's only a handful of guys—maybe not even that -- that can do it in the NBA," Brooks said. "He's one of the best players in the league."

As for Wall himself?

He figures he's ready.

Just waiting for the official clearance from team doctors.

"When I've had an injury in the past, I don't think about it. I go out there and play the same way I played before, and that's with a lot of aggression, a lot of attacking mode, a lot of fast pace. And I've been doing that," he said. "All I had to do was show that glimpse and that showed me I was being myself again."

Washington's latest loss was 101-97 at home against the lowly New York Knicks on Sunday night.

"We just thought it was going to be a cakewalk," Bradley Beal said, "and they smacked us in the mouth."

Bears blank Blue Jays, take fifth win

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Brothers Kiku and A.J. Lizama pitched and batted their way to lifting Chalan Kanoa Bears to a 10-0 shutout win over the Blue Jays in last Monday night's game in the 2018 Saipan Baseball League at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Ballfield.

Kiku Lizama fanned nine in five innings of work on the mound, limiting the Jays to three hits and walking two. Shakobe Rangamar pitched two innings in relief, giving up one hit—a single to Quin Blas in the sixth—with one strikeout and one walk.

A.J. Lizama went 3-for-4 with two runs and two RBIs. He had an RBI single in the first inning and a two-RBI double in the sixth. Henry Lizama, Kiku and A.J.'s cousin, had a double and two runs on a 2-for-2 batting, while Angel Palacios went 2-for-4 with an RBI single in the third inning. Ben Flores had an RBI triple in the fifth inning and went 2-for-3 with one run.

It was the Bears' third straight win after absorbing a 14-4 loss to the defending champions Aces last March 9. The streaking Bears improved to 5-1. The Blue Jays had their third consecutive loss to drop to 2-5. Their last win was an 18-8 decision against the Indians last March 5.

Napu canoe rigging rope cut

Napu Outrigger Canoe Club is asking the public's help in identifying the person or persons who cut the rigging rope of its white canoe.

"The damage was discovered last Monday prior to afternoon practice. The rigging rope was intentionally cut on all four points," Napu president Ponce Rasa said.

"This incident is becoming much more frequent. The previous incident happened in October last year and there were no development on this case," he added.

The club has only four six-man canoes and it will take time to fix the rigging rope of the one that was damaged.

Napu needs its equipment as its members are preparing for a couple of tournaments this year and are having regular practices every Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday.

Napu is requesting anyone who may have seen someone cutting the rigging rope to call the club or report the incident to the Department of Public Safety. ***(Saipan Tribune)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
One of the four points of the Napu's canoe rigging rope was found cut last Monday at Kilili Beach.

Saipan Little League thanks supporters

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Saipan Little League Baseball Inc. vice president A.J. Murig is thanking all the supporters of the program.

Murig told *Saipan Tribune* that Bridge Capital turned over a $5,000 check to SLLBI to help defray the operational costs of the league that holds games every weekend at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios and Miguel "Tan Ge" Basa Pangelinan ballfields.

"We are blessed with donations like the one coming from Bridge Capital. This is part of their commitment of giving back to the community. This is not the first time they gave donation to the program," Murig told *Saipan Tribune*.

The $5,000 was Bridge Capital's biggest donation so far to SLLBI. The amount was part of the company's $26,000 donation to various private and non-profit organizations and clubs on island.

Other businesses, like McDonald's and TanHoldings to name a few, have given cash or in-kind donations to SLLBI, while the league also received appropriation from the Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation.

SLLBI will add the $5,000 to other donations they had received and will use them for trophies, uniforms for the All-Star teams that would represent Saipan in the district tournament and the CNMI in the regionals, and other expenses.

"We are forever grateful for the donation given by Bridge Capital and we also want to thank other businesses for their continued support to the Saipan Little League program, which has almost 300 youth participating this year," said Murig. "We welcome more donations and help from the community."

FAVORED

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third and were followed by Tsunami Saipan's Shoko Litulumar (22:30), Palau's Jamika Olterong (27:57), SSC's Aoi Braxton (27:57), Typhoonz's Keavae Murrie Adams (30:10), and SSC's Jan Marini Millo (32:15).

In other results, Tsunami Saipan's Aika Watanabe and Palau's Jericho Maido placed ahead of the pack in their respective divisions. Watanabe completed the 2.6K race in the girls 13 to 14 age group in 57:13, while Maido also broke the one-hour barrier with his 50:45. Tsunami Saipan's Juhn Tenorio and Nelson Batallones rounded out the Top 3 after posting 54:19 and 54:30, respectively, while SSC's Sophia Gauran (1:02:47) and Palau's Lolmei Uong (1:11:09) joined Watanabe in the podium for the girls class.

In the longest race of the day—the 5.2K—Akimaru was the No. 1 overall finisher and ruled the boys 15 to 24 age group after submitting 1:07:40. He was way ahead of second placer and Palau's Gayman Malcolm Shae (1:12:43) and Pohnpei's Kaleo Kihleng (1:13:55). In the girls division, Palau finished on top with Osisang Chilton clocking in at 1:16:07 and beating Manhoben's Mineri Gomez (1:17:11) and SSC's Jinju Thompson (1:20:05).

In the open division 1.3K course, Typhoonz Emily Bird was first out of the water at the 22:06 mark, while teammate Eva Gibson finished second overall after posting 31:28. Emily's husband Kevin placed third overall and first in the men's division after registering 33:34 and prevailing against Saipan's Florence Antonio (34:03.09) and Ty Izuka (34:03.39).

In the men's open 2.6K distance, Palau coach Billy Brown defeated all three Saipan swimmers after clocking in at 39:27. Colin Thompson was a distant second with his 50:26, while Manny Sitchon (1:20:18) and John Dax Moreno (1:15:15) were the other finishers in the division. In the women's class, Dolphin Club Saipan's Yulia Aleksenko won her duel against Manukai's Mary Tarr, as the former recorded 1:07:56 against the latter's 1:07:71.

NAKAMURA

From Page 28

enth and send the game into an extra inning.

J.P Castro, with two outs at the top of the eighth, walked and moved to second on a Nakamura single before crossing home plate on a Reid Teregeyo RBI single to put the Comets on top. Aizon then had a two-RBI triple to bring in Nakamura and Teregeyo before Jay Lifoifoi was struck out for the second time.

Teregeyo, who came in the seventh to close out for the Comets, shut down the Chiefs at the bottom of the eighth to complete their comeback win.

Nakamura went 3-for-4 with two runs and three RBIs, while Teregeyo batted 2-for-5 with two runs, a triple and two RBIs. Aizon had two runs, a triple, and three RBIs after going 2-for-5 at the plate.

Falcons 15, Comets II 6

Keoni Serrano went 5-for-6, while Jonathan Riungel pitched a complete game as the Falcons downed Comets II.

Serrano scored twice and had a two-RBI single in the Falcons' four-run second inning. Taisei Desebei, Sandy Kani, and Adie Cabrera drove in a run each.

Riungel had 12 strikeouts and two walks, allowing only two earned runs on six hits.

DIZON

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Schoenhals (5:15:13) was second, while Korean Myung Jae Jo (6:42:57) placed third. David Santos, also from Guam, was the other participant in the same age group and completed the race in 8:05:00.

South Korean Jung Young Kim (5:53:29) was the top finisher in the male 45 to 49, followed by Guam's Arnold Gimoto (5:54:24), and Japanese duo Atsushi Sakata (6:09:45) and Noboyuki Kikuchi (6:11:16).

Guatemala's Jose Leal (male 50 to 54, 5:04:23), Ho San Baek of South Korea (male 50 to 59, 5:30:56), and Japan's Teishi Kishii (male 55 to 59, 8:05:00) were the other amateur finishers.

ZES

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Monday.

Maniago tallied two goals in Kanoa's win, while Gil and Toves chipped in one apiece. Matansa also won over TanHoldings FC, 8-7, to make it to the finals. Toves had a hat trick in the close victory, while Maniago and Pablo contributed two apiece, and Hahn made one.

Mark Roque led TanHoldings' losing cause with his four goals, while, Anthony Bergancia, Mary Joy Aniana, and Ariel Narvaez registered one each. TanHoldings finished the tournament with a win to its credit, thanks to a 1-0 triumph over Matansa. Kaithlynn Chavez scored the lone goal in the match.

TanHoldings also played ZES FC last Monday with the visiting squad earning a 2-0 victory. Baker and Moss made it to the board for the eventual champion. ZES FC's other win last Monday was against Matansa, 1-0, with Manibusan scoring.

Meanwhile, the Guam club also played futsal games at the artificial turf at the TSL Sports Complex last Sunday.

ZES FC split its players into two teams with ZES 1 winning over Southern United FC and Matansa. Versus Southern, ZES 1 eased its way to an 8-0 victory, behind the three goals of Flanajen. Moss added two goals, while Manibusan, Sablan, and Diaz got one each. Against Matansa, ZES 1 eked out a 3-2 win with Sablan drilling all the visiting team's goals. Sherwin Gin and Alex Megino recorded the pair of goals for Matansa.

ZES 2 also prevailed against Southern United, 4-1, with Rama tallying two goals and Baker and Perez posting one each. Kenneth Palacios delivered the lone goal for Southern United. ZES 2 faced Matansa, too, and settled for a 1-1 draw, while the former lost to TanHoldings, 0-3. TanHoldings and Kanoa defeated both ZES 1 and 2.

NMIS

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some of the events, while parents ran in the relay events, teaming up with teachers and students at the track. They also competed in the tug-of-war and sack race held at the Ada Gym.

The cheerdance capped the sportsfest, showcasing the students' dancing skills as well as their team spirit.

Team Red Phoenix emerged as the overall champion, while the Green Mantis and the Blue Jays finished second and third, respectively. The Blue Jays topped the cheerdance event.

NMIS would like to extend their gratitude to Northern Marianas Sports Association staff Elias Rangamar and the Oleai Sports Complex, Marianas Business Plaza, 360 Revolving Restaurant, Island Best Choice, and PSS Early Head Start for making the event a success. The school would also like to thank its students, parents, faculty, staff, management, and events sponsors. ***(PR)***

KFAS extends streak to keep lead

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Korean Football Association on Saipan made it five wins in a row following an 11-4 rout of Pacific Islands Club in the Division B game in the 2018 Spring M-League last Sunday at the Koblerville Elementary School Field.

KFAS set up the easy win after building a 6-1 advantage at the break. Jun Woo Lee led KFAS' strong start, as he drilled a hat trick in the first 45 minutes of the match and went on to finish with four goals. Juan Oh also contributed four goals, Si Young Heo chipped in two, and Ju Won Jung added one.

With its unbeaten record in five games, KFAS strengthened its hold on the top spot in the team standings of the six-squad field. PIC, which drew one goal each from John Colisao, Marley Buchun, Jeremie Tanghal, and Albert Bergancia, is at the cellar with its 0-1-4 win-draw-loss mark.

Matansa (3-1-1), Sun Palace (2-1-2), CNMI Women's U16 National Team (2-1-2), and Shirley's (1-0-4) complete the standings.

In other results in Division B, Sun Palace and Matansa registered contrasting wins last weekend.

Sun Palace edged out Shirley's, 4-3, while Matansa cruised past the WNT U16, 6-1.

Feng Yu delivered a pair of goals for Sun Palace, including the go-ahead in the 78th minute. His other goal came 10 minutes earlier, while Jack Phan duplicated Yu's feat after scoring in the 15th and 48th minute.

Shirley's got one goal apiece from Yong Hoo Jeon, Jun Liu, and Jedidah Peteru with the latter's goal in the 73rd minute forcing the last deadlock in the closely fought match before Yu saved the day for Sun Palace.

In the Matansa-WNT U16 tiff, the former played better offensively in the second half to outclass its opponent.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Pacific Islands Club, left, and Korean Football Association on Saipan players fight for the ball during their Division B game in the 2018 Spring M-League last Sunday at the Koblerville Elementary School Field.

Matansa was ahead by only a hair at the break, 2-1, with Amzad Khan and Travis Camacho scoring for the eventual winners. Mia Carreon drilled the lone goal for WNT U16. Khan then added one more in the second half, while Hamid Kawsar, Kamrul Kamrul, and Young Ha Hwang also hit the board in the final frame to hand Matansa its third victory.

DIVISION A
TanHoldings 5, Kanoa 2

Over at the Hopwood Middle School Field, TanHoldings also notched its third victory to keep the No. 2 spot in the team standings.

Mark Esalan starred for TanHoldings (3-1-0) with his three goals, while John Michael Rojas and Mareko Tekopua registered the two other goals for the 2017 fall champion. Ruselle Zapanta and Kirt Andon scored for Kanoa, which is at the bottom of the rankings with its 0-1-3 card.

Teen Ayuyus 1, Okadaya 0

The Teen Ayuyus broke into the win column after slipping past Okadaya in the finale of last weekend's triple-header.

Joshua Waldo posted the lone goal in the match after finding the back of the net in the 18th minute. The Teen Ayuyus, with their 1-3-1 record, is at No. 4 in the team standings, just slightly ahead of Okadaya (1-1-3).

Meanwhile, MP United (4-0-0) retained the top spot in the division after winning against Winners & Pacific Eco via forfeit.

NMIS holds sportsfest; Red Phoenix wins

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Members of the Red Phoenix join the parade of teams during last Saturday's Northern Marianas International School 4th Annual Sportsfest and Family Fun Day at the Oleai Sports Complex.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
The Blue Jays celebrate their win in the cheeerdance competition during last Saturday's Northern Marianas International School 4th Annual Sportsfest and Family Fun Day at the Oleai Sports Complex.

More than 60 families gathered at the Oleai Sports Complex last Saturday to participate in the Northern Marianas International School's 4th Annual Sportsfest and Family Fun Day.

NMIS' weeklong event was held to promote camaraderie and sportsmanship among the students and foster good relationship with the parents, faculty, and the school's staff.

Some of the indoor and outdoor games were held at the school grounds. The NMIS faculty members facilitated the activities, which included chess, dodgeball, and basketball.

Banner raising, track and field relay—25 meters, 50m, 100m, 150m, and 200m runs, tug-of-war, sack race, and cheerleading competition were all held at the Oleai track oval and the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Three teams—Blue Jays, Red Phoenix, and Green Mantis—competed for the top honors. All family members, siblings, cousins where grouped together in one team.

Early Head Start students as young as 2 years old joined

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Dizon, Borja lead local charge in Tagaman

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Veteran cyclist Nap Dizon and youngster Carter Borja earned the distinction of being the only two Saipan bets to join and complete the Half Ironman distance of last Saturday's 29th Tagaman Triathlon 70. 3.

Dizon and Borja were among the 21 finishers of the race that had a 1.9-kilometer, 90K bike, and 21K run. Twenty-three individuals signed up for the Tagaman 70.3 event. Participants swam from Kanoa Resort to Kilili Beach then took on the bike course that was composed of two loops from Kilili Beach to as far as Banzai Cliff up north and Koblerville down south. For the final leg, participants ran two loops from Kilili Beach to Chamolinian Village in Garapan.

Dizon was the lone finisher in the male 40 to 44 division, completing the grueling race in 6:05:10 as Frenchman Eric Cordeau failed to start the race. Borja also went solo in the U19 category and had a time of 6:28:34.

Guam's Laura Nadeau, who competed in the 30 to 34 age group, came in fifth overall behind the pros—including compatriot and women's pro/elite champion Manami Iijima (4:34:40)—completing the race in 4:45:52. Nadeau even finished ahead of women's pro/elite runner-up Dan Bi Hong (4:51:10) and third placer A Reum Jo (4:53:39) both from South Korea. Chai-Wen Hseh of Chinese Taipei was at far second behind Nadeau after logging 6:09:23, while Japan's Kanako Moriyama (8:15:00) was ranked third.

American Erica Dueger clocked in at 6:27:08 to beat Reiko Okamoto of Japan in their one-on-one matchup in the female 50 to 54 division. Another Japanese, Tomoki Imanaka, was the solo participant in the men's 20 to 24, crossing the finish line in 6:12:34.

Bong Jun An, another athlete from the large group of South Koreans, was the second-best non-pro finisher after checking in at 4:54:24 to clinch the male 25 to 29 division crown. Japan's Mizuki Kumagai came in at second with his 6:45:57.

American Daniel Dolan bested three other competitors in the 35 to 39 division with a time of 4:57:50, which was also the third fastest among the non-pros. Guam's Gary

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JON PEREZ
Winners and participants in the 29th Tagaman Triathlon 70.3 join race officials for a group photo after last Saturday's awards banquet at the Barefoot Bar at the Kanoa Resort.

NFL weighing changes to catch rule

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Sports

Celtics top Suns for fourth straight win

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ZES FC outlasts Kanoa

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Guam's ZES Football Club went home victorious after outgunning Kanoa FC in a penalty shootout, 5-3, during their championship game in the 2018 Spring Break Friendlies yesterday at the Francisco M. Sablan Middle School Field.

All five players that ZES FC assigned to take the crucial PKs delivered with E.J. Manibusan starting things off for the visiting team. Beav Perez, Gavin Baker, Donovan Moss, and Riley Rama also scored on their PKs. Eli Sanchez is ZES FC's goalkeeper, while other members of the Jonathan Romero and Jason Cunliffe-coached squad are Raif Sablan, Landon Diaz, Noah Legaspi, Evan Flanajen, Luis Salas, Tai Castro, Arjan Sachdej, Robert Mou Ithrop, and Richie Sanchez.

Rama and Gavin scored for ZES FC in regulation with the latter's shot in the second half forcing the deadlock. Rama's goal also came in the final frame, while Markus Toves registered Kanoa's first goal and Jim Maniago made the second one. In the deciding penalty shootout, Kanoa drew goals from Daniel Mar Pablo, Taehun Hahn, and Toves.

The tough victory over Kanoa allowed ZES FC to atone for its 0-4 loss to the same team in their first meeting last

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Players and coaches of ZES Football Club and Kanoa FC pose for a photo after playing in the championship game in the 2018 Spring Break Friendlies yesterday at the Francisco M. Sablan Middle School Field.

Favored swimmers deliver

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Saipan Swim Club's Jinnosuke Suzuki and Tsunami Swimming Center Saipan's Ashley Dangol lived up to high expectations after ruling their respective divisions during last Sunday's 39th Annual SSC Ocean Swim held in the waters near Naked Fish in Susupe.

Jinnosuke, the favorite in the boys 11 to 12 age group, was first out of the water in the 1.3-kilometer course, completing the race in 17:12. He defeated Tsunami Saipan's Isaiah Aleksenko (17:20) and Hans Xu (20:22), fellow SSC swimmers Anthony Camacho-Deleon Guerrero (19:05), Taiyo Akimaru (19:38), Mark Chavez (32:00) and Henry Wilcox (37:23), and Manhoben's Israel Poppe (21:04).

In the girls division, Ashley led the finishers list after checking in at 19:25. SSC's Jinie Thompson (22:13) and Palau's Klei Andreas (22:14) were ranked second and

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Swimmers head out to the course during last Sunday's 39th Annual SSC Ocean Swim held in the waters near Naked Fish in Susupe.

Nakamura, Comets beat Chiefs

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Bing Nakamura had an inside-the-park home run in the fifth and the Comets I scored four runs in the extra inning to complete a 10-6 come-from-behind win over the WPTC Chiefs in last Sunday's Junior League division game in the 2018 Saipan Little League Baseball at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Ballfield.

The Chiefs were leading at 5-2 after 4 1/2 innings when Nakamura blasted a two-RBI inside-the-park hit to move the Comets within one.

Eli Ray Castro, who had a leadoff single at the bottom of the seventh, then scored on a passed ball to give the Chiefs more distance, 6-4.

However, Nakamura countered with a leadoff walk at the top of the inning then stole second before reaching home plate on an RBI triple by Nate Aizon to cut the deficit to one anew. Aizon later tied the game when he also scored on a passed ball with one out. Next at bat was Jay Lifoifoi and he struck out, while Justin Magofna had an infield fly, sandwiching a Sneak Sumor walk, to end the sev-

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JON PEREZ
Comets I pitcher Bing Nakamura throws the plate during their game against the WPTC Chiefs in the Junior League division of the 2018 Saipan Little League Baseball last Sunday at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Ballfield.